Spirits and Photos

two papers on
Sarah Orne Jewett

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Revised and Expanded
2025

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Introduction

This volume includes two papers originally published at the on-line archive, the Sarah Orne Jewett Text Project.

"Communing with the Dead: Celia Thaxter, John Greenleaf Whittier, Sarah Orne Jewett, Annie Adams Fields" appeared in July 2020. In this report, I present and discuss primary materials documenting the activities of Thaxter, Whittier, Jewett and Fields during 1882-1885, when the women were deeply involved in Spiritualism: consulting mediums, holding séances, and conversing with each other and with Whittier about their experiences.

This paper was expanded and revised in 2024 and again in 2025, after a number of new letters from the correspondence of these authors came to my attention. Especially notable are selections from relevant letters Fields wrote to Whittier between 1882 and 1887, especially those from 1883.

"A *Deephaven* Collaboration: Sarah Orne Jewett, Emma Lewis Coleman, Charlotte Alice Baker, Susan Minot Lane" first appeared in January 2022, and it has been slightly revised for this volume. During the 1880s, these four prominent New England women participated to varying degrees in a project to create photographic illustrations for Sarah Orne Jewett's first book, *Deephaven* (1877). Published accounts of this collaboration vary widely, and some are manifestly erroneous. In this paper, I present and discuss all the primary sources I have been able to obtain, in an attempt to produce an accurate account. The materials include correspondence, contemporary accounts, and an examination of the photographs that eventually appeared in a single rebound copy of *Deephaven* made by Coleman.

Communing with the Dead:

Celia Thaxter, John Greenleaf Whittier, Sarah Orne Jewett, Annie Adams Fields

"It may be found out some o' these days," he said earnestly. "We may know it all, the next step; where Mrs. Begg is now, for instance. Certainty, not conjecture, is what we all desire."

"I suppose we shall know it all some day," said I.

"We shall know it while yet below," insisted the captain, with a flush of impatience on his thin cheeks. "We have not looked for truth in the right direction. I know what I speak of; those who have laughed at me little know how much reason my ideas are based upon."

The Country of the Pointed Firs (1896)

The main purpose of this paper is to bring together the factual information available about communicating with the dead in the correspondence of Celia Thaxter, John Greenleaf Whittier, Sarah Orne Jewett, and Annie Adams Fields. The structure consists of four parts: a brief introduction that provides basic context, a chronological presentation of relevant materials from the correspondence of these authors, a summary chronology, and a collection of observations that explores issues arising from the correspondence.

Part 1: Contexts

> I wish so to see you tonight and long so for tomorrow and next day's letters to know about dear Sandpiper [*Celia Thaxter*]. It has been a very sad day to me as you will know. It seems as if I could hear her talking and as if we lived those June days over again. Most of my friends have gone out of illness and long weeks of pain -- but with her the door seems to have opened and shut and what is a very strange thing I can see her face -- you know I never could call up faces easily and never before that I remember have I been able to see how a person looked, who has died, but again and again I seem to see her -- That takes me a strange step out of myself. All this new idea of Tesla's: must it not like everything else have its spiritual side -- and yet where imagination stops and consciousness of the unseen begins, who can settle that even to one's self!
>
> Sarah Orne Jewett to Annie Adams Fields on 28 August 1894, reflecting upon the death of Celia Thaxter on 25 August 1894.

During the years of 1882 through the first half of 1885, Celia Thaxter maintained a deep interest in Spiritualism. She drew a number of her friends, including Jewett and Fields, into Spiritualist sittings, in which living people communicated with spirits of the dead. Though Whittier did not participate in those meetings, he conversed with the three women on various aspects of the topic, in which he took a keen interest.

Spiritualism in the United States was a religious movement that began in the 1840s. After the American Civil War, the movement gained a larger following, provoking increasing skepticism and charges of fraud. In the 1880s a Society for Psychical Research organized to investigate spiritualist phenomena scientifically. Wikipedia provides reasonably informative brief

surveys of these topics. The core beliefs of Spiritualism included:

- There are two worlds, the material world of everyday life and a contiguous immaterial world, where the spirits of deceased people continue in the same identities they had when alive.

- The spirits in the other world are refined and benevolent. They actively aid the living in their grief and their troubles, like guardian angels, whether or not the living are aware of or even believe in the possibility of such help. These spirits are eager to communicate with the living.

- Living people can become aware of spiritual presences, and they can cultivate the ability to commune and receive messages. Some living people are particularly sensitive and may become "mediums," intermediaries capable of directly contacting specific dead spirits and conveying their messages to those they cared for in life

These beliefs were generally compatible with the Protestant Christianity that dominated in the United States during this period. American Christians were likely to disagree with Spiritualists mainly about mediums and their public performances. Like Whittier, a devout Quaker, most Christians were skeptical that living people *should* initiate communications with the dead, even if that really was possible, and many doubted the possibility. As séances tended to include a variety of physical events supposedly caused by visiting spirits and even materializations of the spirits, skepticism and charges of fraud also increased. But there was little doubt that the dead cared for, watched over, and could communicate with the living on a spiritual level. Such communion was a manifestation of Divine Love; the love that bound people together in mortal life became the means as well as the motive for continued communion after death.

Conventional Christians were especially likely to disagree with Spiritualists about materialization, the belief that the dead could miraculously cause physical events and even assume material form in the world of the living. As Georgess McHargue has shown in *Facts, Frauds, and Phantasms: A Survey of the Spiritualist Movement* (1972), Spiritualist sittings or séances came often to include manifestations of the spirit presence, ranging from sounds, winds and temperature changes to apparitions of all kinds, but especially of hands, faces, and in some cases, the full bodies of spirit beings. In retrospect, it seems clear that sittings could turn into spectacles; indeed some of the best-known mediums became entertainers akin to stage magicians, with elaborate paraphernalia, restraints such as binding the medium, and tests of the reality of spirit presences, such as photographs.

In 1880, William Dean Howells published a critique of Spiritualism in his novel, *The Undiscovered Country*. The book appeared first as a serial in *Atlantic Monthly*, where he had long served as an editor, corresponding with Fields, Jewett, Thaxter and Whittier. A central character is Dr. Boynton, who had been a materialist without religion until the death of his wife: "I embraced the philosophy of spiritualism, because it promised immediate communion and reunion with the wife I had lost" (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1880, 1908, p. 281). In his subsequent efforts to produce the sort of "scientific proof" of the reality of an afterlife, Boynton resembles Jewett's Captain Littlepage in *The Country of the Pointed Firs*. Though he is a sincere pursuer of truth, his zeal leads him to exploit his susceptible daughter as a medium and to do a good deal of harm. Not long before his death, he comes to understand that he has been deluded. He has sought proof of life after death in physical manifestations perceptible by the human senses, and he concludes, "it is not spiritualism at all, but materialism, -- a grosser materialism than that which denies; a materialism that asserts and affirms, and appeals for proof to purely physical phenomena" (pp. 366-7). He also concludes that as a belief system, Spiritualism is deeply deficient: "All other systems of belief, all other revelations of the unseen world, have supplied a rule of life, have been given for our *use* here. But this offers nothing but the barren fact that we live again. If it has had any effect upon morals, it has been to corrupt them" (367). Though he claims to have returned to his previous atheism, Howells's doctor presents a critique of Spiritualism that represents a mainline Protestant point of view.

Fields, Jewett, Thaxter and Whittier all were firm sharers in the core beliefs of Spiritualism, and so it is not surprising that they were attracted to it during the 1880s, especially after the women had experienced the losses of close family members and friends. For Whittier and perhaps for Jewett, materialization, however, became the decisive barrier to belief. Though they believed that the dead could communicate with the living, they doubted that the dead would act physically in the material world.

Celia Thaxter consulted with several spirit mediums and, eventually, became convinced that she could commune with the dead, though she never received specific messages without the aid of a medium. During the three and a half years when Thaxter was a true believer, Whittier was the most obviously skeptical. Like the three women and like most religious Americans of the time, Whittier believed that the boundary between the material and spiritual realms was permeable. He eagerly sought out and valued evidence of people experiencing supernatural connections between these two worlds. He read the publications of the British and American Societies for Psychical Research with a critical eye, trying to distinguish between true experience as opposed to fraud and credulity. He was deeply distrustful of attempts to contact the dead and demand information from them. Though he was glad that Thaxter found comfort in her sittings, he doubted that they would prove ultimately helpful.

Jewett seems to have shared Whittier's skepticism, though she reported that she had frequent personal experiences to persuade her that her beloved dead, particularly her father, watched over her and facilitated her relationships with her closest friends, such as Thaxter and Fields. For a detailed examination of her beliefs see my essay: "Living for the Other World: Sarah Orne Jewett as a Religious Writer," *Spectral America: Phantoms and the National Imagination*. ed. Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock. Madison, WI: Popular, 2004. 78-100.

As the following letters show, Fields's position is less clear. At two periods she seems deeply involved. The first was during the summer of 1882, when Thaxter provided her a number of detailed reports of messages from Fields's deceased husband, James T. Fields. These came to Fields by letter while she was traveling in Europe with Jewett. The second period was in the winter of 1884-5, when Fields herself, along with Jewett, Thaxter and several others of their circle participated in sittings.

However, there is evidence that Fields entered into the 1884 period with well-developed skepticism about some aspects of Spiritualist practice. Whittier's letters to Fields indicate that Fields shared his belief that such sittings were an impious imposition upon the dead that at least tasted of exploitation and sensationalism. Particularly important is her brief letter to Whittier of 17 December 1883, in which she recommends *Memoir of Annie Keary by her Sister* (1882), a biography of British author, Annie Keary (1825-1879) by Eliza Harriett Keary (1827-1918). The biography reports Annie Keary's judgment that while Spiritualism offers a promising antidote to the growing scientific materialism of the time, its practice is fraught with dangers and pitfalls for the unwary and credulous. If Fields entered into the sittings of 1884-5 sharing Whittier's and Jewett's skepticism and also their love for Thaxter, the women probably were present more out of care for her than to sustain their own beliefs. Still, it seems Fields and Jewett could be moved by a sitting, as indicated in Thaxter's extraordinary letter to Whittier of 12 January 1885.

Finally, it seems helpful to understanding the context of these events to take some notice of how these four experienced the deaths of loved ones around this time. Scholars and historians generally note that the American Civil War -- when so many people died in such a short time -- led to a resurgence of Spiritualism after 1865. Spiritualist beliefs and practices provided many with a new means of processing their grief. The three women did not experience many personal losses during the war, but beginning in the late 1870s, this changed.

Significant Deaths for this Group

1877, 19 November -- Thaxter's mother, Eliza Rymes Laighton

1878, 20 September -- Jewett's father, Theodore Herman Jewett

1879, 9 March -- Close friend of the Thaxter family, John Weiss

1879, 8 September -- Thaxter's close friend and artistic mentor, William Morris Hunt, by suicide

1881, 24 April -- Fields's husband, James T. Fields

1882, 24 March -- Close friend of all four, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

1882, 27 April -- Close friend of all four, Ralph Waldo Emerson

1882, 20 May -- Thaxter family friend, George McKean Folsom.

1882, 24 December -- Ann Sophia Towne Darrah, wife of Robert Kendall Darrah, both close friends of Fields and Thaxter. Robert K. Darrah was a frequent participant in Thaxter's sittings before his death on 22 May 1885.

1883, 7 January -- Whittier's brother, Matthew

1884, 31 May -- Thaxter's husband, Levi Thaxter

Thaxter's loss of her mother was especially significant, reflected frequently in her letters

below and sometimes in her poems, such as "Oh Tell Me Not of Heavenly Halls" (*Scribner's Monthly* November 1881). Of course, there were other important events that must have influenced this group's interactions with and thoughts about the dead -- weddings, births, etc. And the daily events of their busy lives no doubt influenced them in ways difficult to determine. But clearly, these deaths were important determinants, some of these lost loved ones becoming the spirits from whom the three women and their friends received messages.

Part 2: Correspondence about Spiritualism

> When folks is goin' 'tis all natural, and only common things can jar upon the mind. You know plain enough there's somethin' beyond this world; the doors stand wide open. 'There's somethin' of us that must still live on; we've got to join both worlds together an' live in one but for the other.
>
> Almira Todd in Sarah Orne Jewett's "The Foreigner" (1900), quoting her doctor, who paraphrases Sir Thomas Browne's "Letter to a Friend" (1690).

The following excerpts are presented in what I believe is their chronological order. As the authors do not always date their letters, a number of the dates are established by inference and may not be exact.

I have excerpted the passages from "The Correspondence of Sarah Orne Jewett," a division of the on-line archive, the Sarah Orne Jewett Text Project. I include passages that deal in some way with Spiritualism, reflecting about the dead, and "psychic phenomena." While this removes reports of aspects of their lives that form part of the context of their experience, selecting focuses on what they say about their occult experiences. Further, I have re-edited the passages, removing editorial information that seems irrelevant here, including the names of the repositories holding the manuscripts of these letters. To see the editorial materials and the full available contexts of these years, one must consult the original presentations.

In removing editorial machinery, I have revised the explanatory notes. In "The Correspondence of Sarah Orne Jewett," I have chosen to present each letter as much as possible to stand on its own. As a result, there is a good deal of redundancy in the annotations. One need not read the entire collection in order to know the references and personages in any given letter. Here, I have reduced repetition, assuming that most readers will read through this collection rather than "sampling." I have repeated notes where that seems important for clarity, especially about the identities of people who are mentioned.

Editorial Notes

In re-editing the letters, I have tried to eliminate editorial insertions within texts. The few I believe had to remain typically provide words or punctuation the authors probably intended to include or that seem helpful for clarity. Such notes appear within { braces } and, I hope, are self-explanatory.

It will not surprise those familiar with reading 19th-century American correspondence that these writers used a variety of short-hand conventions in their letters. Perhaps most obvious is their inconsistent use of the apostrophe. Some regularly use shortened versions of words such as "and," "morning" and "evening." I have rendered these as they are written and without comment.

1881

James T. Fields dies on 24 April

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2 June -- Thaxter to Fields

O Annie -- it is so beautiful every where, but I never get rid of this "want that hollows all the heart,"* & could cry for my sweet mother* every instant in the day, or gladly, how gladly! leave it all could I find & clasp her dear hand in the dark & go with her away from this resplendent, fragrant, singing, blooming world.

---

21 June -- Thaxter to Fields

Annie, would it not be a divine thing if when we go away out of life, two could go together, hand in hand ---- Must we be alone I wonder, -- When in some great disaster so many go, at once, do they find comfort in each other's company, I wonder, & wonder -- But I wish I could go, alone or in company, no matter how -- I have had enough of this ---- All in good time!

---

30 October -- Thaxter to Fields

Surely there must be a great light coming to you soon. People cannot be so dark, so heavy-hearted without a corresponding joy not far away -- I am sure of it -- in some way it will come to you & lift you up, my poor darling --

Notes

"hollows all the heart": The origin of this quotation is not known. Possibly, Thaxter refers to a poem by Merva (Mary Kilgallen), "The Song of the Maid of Saragosa," from *Young Ireland* 7 (1881) pp. 606-7, which includes these lines:

> The pang that hollows all the heart has shot into my brain
> A fire that needs shall life consume if here I must remain.
> For Kilgallen, see *The Poets of Ireland* (1912), p. 235.

However, she may have seen the line in another location. For example, in *The Ladies Repository* monthly journal of 1868, she may have read an anonymous piece, "We Want Something" (pp. 182-3), that includes this passage:

> Since the death-frost, there have been the frosts of many Winters to chill that bosom on which I took my infant sleep; never such rest can my weary head and heart find again; but infolded in the bosom of Infinite Love, I shall be satisfied.
>
> I am glad that we feel this want; … every soul that has sought Christ has been impelled by it. Besides, this "want that hollows all the heart" is a hint at the divinity in our nature; ….

my sweet mother: Thaxter's mother was Eliza Rymes Laighton (1804-1877).

1882

Whittier to Fields -- 2 January

When our dear Sarah was here this afternoon I told her of the new book I was reading. I have just finished, and as I understand her that you had not read it, I send it, for I am sure you will like it in the main. It is exactly in the line of our spiritualistic conversations, and reveals something of the Oriental marvels of mind-reading, trance, and the sleep of the body while the spiritual man goes abroad over the earth.

I have been intensely interested in the book, and hope you will read it with as much satisfaction as I have.

Fields to Whittier -- 24 February

… about your new poem "At Last" which when Celia Thaxter came a day or two ago, I re-read with her. "How dear and near it makes him seem to us," she said! Those 'hands familiar' beckoning us seem indeed enough -- all we need and all we ask. For the rest we can trust and be at peace.

Whittier to Fields -- 24 March*

With regard to modem Spiritualism I have had a feeling that it was not safe or healthful for mind or body to yield myself to an influence the nature of which was unknown. There is a fascination in it, but the fascination is blended with doubt and repulsion. I am disgusted with the tricks and greed of these mediums; their pretended spiritual intercourse has none of the conditions which Tennyson's "In Memoriam"* describes, and I do not know that I really need additional proof of the life hereafter. I think my loved ones are still living and awaiting me. And I wait and trust. And yet how glad and grateful I should be to know! I must believe that our friends are near us -- that they still love and watch over us.

Notes

March: This letter appears in *The Works of John Greenleaf Whittier* (1894) v. 9, p. 677.

Tennyson's "In Memoriam": British poet Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892) published the completed long poem *In Memoriam A.H.H*. in 1850. It seems likely that Whittier refers to sections 92-94 of the poem. There Tennyson gives reasons why he would doubt any vision of the deceased Arthur Hallam or any prophecy that seemed to come from him. Further, he does not believe that Hallam's spirit would make itself materially visible to his eyes, for the spirit of a dead person would communicate only with the spirit of a living person, not through the material means of the senses. And such communication can occur only when one is pure of heart and mind:

> In vain shalt thou, or any, call
> The spirits from their golden day,
> Except, like them, thou too canst say,
> My spirit is at peace with all.

Jewett to Fields -- 24 March

Today is father's birthday.* I wonder if people keep the day they die for another birthday after they get to heaven? I have been thinking about him a very great deal this last day or two. I wonder if I am doing at all the things he wishes I would do, and I hope he does not get tired of me.

Note

birthday: Jewett's father, Theodore Herman Jewett (24 March 1815 - 20 September 1878).

Whittier to Fields -- 25 March

Another of our dear and beloved has passed from us to join those who await us. The little circle first broken by the calling away of dear Fields is once more narrowed by the departure of Longfellow. Emerson, with his wonderful intellect clouded, Dr. Holmes* & myself alone remain.

How sorry I am that I could not speak to him & take his hand when I called last Sunday! -- I must wait a little while now. I hope & trust he has found a joyful welcome from those he loves and who loved him on earth.

I know what thy feeling must be; and with sincere sympathy I am always thy friend.

Note

Holmes: Reflecting upon the death of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow on 24 March 1882, Whittier recalls another death of importance to him and Mrs. Fields: James T. Fields on 24 April 1881. And he notes the illness and nearness to death of himself and his friends, Ralph Waldo Emerson, who will die in another month, and Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., one of the few still living and active of the major poets of his generation.

Jewett to Fields -- Around 25 March

I have just seen the notice of Longfellow's death, and while it was hardly a surprise, still it gave me a great shock. Are not you glad that we saw him on that pleasant day when he was ready to talk about books and people, and showed so few signs of the weakness and pain which troubled us in those other visits? It will always be a most delightful memory, and it is all the better that we did not dream it was your last good-bye. I can't help saying that I am glad he has gone away before you had to leave him and know it was the last time you should see him. I dreaded your getting the news of this after we were on the other side of the sea,* darling! After all, it is change that is so hard to bear, change grows every year a harder part of our losses. It is fitting over our old selves to new conditions of things, without the help of the ones who made it easier for us to live, and to do our best that is so hard! I have just been thinking that a life like that is so much less affected by death than most lives. A man who has written as Longfellow wrote, stays in this world always to be known and loved -- to be a helper and a friend to his fellow men. It is a grander thing than we can wholly grasp, that life of his, a wonderful life, that is not shut in to his own household or kept to the limits of his every-day existence. That part of him seems very little when one measures the rest of him with it, and the possibilities of this imperfect world reach out to a wide horizon, for one's eye cannot follow the roads his thought and influence have always gone. And now what must heaven be to him! This world could hardly ask any more from him: he has done so much for it, and the news of his death takes away from most people nothing of his life. His work stands like a great cathedral in which the world may worship and be taught to pray, long after its tired architect goes home to rest.

I cannot help thinking of those fatherless daughters of his. I know they were glad and proud because he was famous and everybody honored him, and they are being told those things over and over in these days, and are not comforted. Only one's own faith and bravery help one to live at first.

Note

the sea: Jewett and Fields are planning a May-October trip to Europe.

Jewett to Whittier -- April 4

I shall spend the 24th of April* with Mrs. Fields. I shall not let her stay alone that day even if she wishes it, and I don't believe she will. I shall surely see you in Amesbury by and bye. I want to know how to think of you there. It is like having people go off into space when you don't know what they see from their windows or where they keep their books. Mrs. Fields said she hoped she could see you too. She was as busy as ever, and for many reasons I was glad I could be there for a few days. She was so sorry about Longfellow's having gone.* I think she misses him more and more but it touched me very much

because she kept saying she was so glad to think that he and Mr. Fields were together. They would be so happy! Really she seemed to think more of that than anything that belonged to the change, and it was giving her a wonderful pleasure. And she had written me about the strange experiences of last week and week before. You know I was growing curious enough about such things! and I found out where this person lived, and went alone one day to see what she would say to me! Don't say anything to anyone about it, please, Mr. Whittier, for nobody is to know but you and Mrs. Fields. I didn't tell "The Sandpiper"* to whom I suppose I owe it all!! I was most suspicious and unbelieving even after Mrs. Fields told me and it really wasn't until after I had gone home again and began to talk it over that I quite took in the strangeness of it. It seemed quite an everyday thing that that strange woman should be talking about my life and my affairs as if she had always known me. I thought she was quick-witted and, after she told me to ask her questions, that she was clever in "putting two and two together." She told me first that I was going away before long, that there would be a good many people all together in one place, and, without saying it was the steamer, gave a picture of it all. She told me what a good time I was going to have and how much better I was to come home, that it was even going to be pleasanter than I thought, and there was to be no accident, that father wouldn't have let me take that steamer if there had been misfortune ahead. She said "James" wished to speak to me, and described Mr. Fields perfectly. (She had already told me all about Mrs. Fields and our going together) and she said he and my companion for the journey were very near each other "like one person." She told me wonderful things about my father and about his death and our relation to each other, and what he said to me was amazing. There was a great deal that came from him and from Mr. Fields that is the most capital advice, the most practical help to me, perfect "sailing orders" you know! All this I should be so glad to tell you someday. They said they had made all the plans for Mrs. Fields and me and helped us carry it out, that we needed each other and could help each other. I wish I could tell you all that <u>now!</u> But of all things I believe this startled me most and was the proof that there was no sham. The woman told me my father liked so much a friend who was with him there, they were much together and he was very fond of her. "Her name is Greene, do you know her? -- Bessie, I think; Bessie Greene."* And I said no, he had never known such a girl and I never had, but after I had told Mrs. Fields almost everything it suddenly flashed into my mind, and I said, "What was that Miss Greene's name, the daughter of your old friends who had studied medicine and was so charming, and who was lost in the Schiller when Dr. Susan Dimock was?" and she told me "Bessie."

Now wasn't that very strange? From what I know of her, she would delight Father's heart, and they have somehow found each other. There was no "mind reading." I have not thought of her for months, but it all needed no proof, and it gives me such a pleasant glimpse of father's life. It was a very long talk and it was very pleasant. There was much about my writing, and about my taking care of myself, that showed on <u>someone's</u> part a complete knowledge of "the situation."

I do not think I care to go again, though it was said Father wished to say one or two other things before I went away. I can't tell you how much good it did me, for it made me certain of some things which had puzzled me. I should like to go to another "medium" someday, to see what was common to the two, for I still have "an eye out" for tricks of the trade and yet I can't help being ashamed as I write this, for it was all so real and so perfectly sensible and straightforward, and free from silliness. Mrs. Fields did not ask any questions but I sometimes did. I said, "Do my father and the person you call James know each other?" and I was answered that I ought to see them laugh, they were having great fun over me. They came to me together to tell me so soon after Mr. Fields died, which was the truth, for the Sunday I went to hear Dr. Bartol's* funeral sermon last spring I had a sudden consciousness of their being in the pew too, in a great state of merriment. The sermon was very funny and Father was as much amused as Mr. Fields himself. Dr. Bartol was a classmate of Father's. I had always wished that Mr. Fields and Father could know each other, and I remember how glad I was that Sunday!

I have written you this long rambling letter, but I could not wait to tell you all that I could write of that strange day. It doesn't make me wish to run after such things; I only feel surer than ever of a companionship of which I have <u>always</u> been assured. It was no surprise when the message came from father that he knew me so much better than when we saw each other and that he was always with me, and loved me ten times more than when he went away. And I was given a dear and welcome charge and care over Mrs. Fields which I can speak about better than write to you. I think this has been a great blessing to her, and a great comfort. I do not believe she will go again. I cannot imagine

making it a sort of entertainment, and letting it be the gratification of curiosity. No good can come of that. I believe it would take away too much of our freedom of choice which is something to which we cannot cling closely enough. One does not think of seeking these impulses and teachings of the spirits, only of listening to them gladly when they come. But one sails with sealed orders* so often, that the help which came to me the other day was most welcome.

Notes

24th of April: First anniversary of the death of James T. Fields.

Longfellow's having gone: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow died March 24, 1882.

The Sandpiper: Celia Thaxter's nickname.

Greene: Elizabeth Greene was the daughter of William Batchelder Greene, author and theologian. She and her friend Miss Susan Dimock (1847-1875) died in the wreck of the steamship *Schiller* near Land's End, England, on May 7, 1875.

Bartol: Cyrus Augustus Bartol (1813-1900) was a Unitarian clergyman.

sealed orders: Wikipedia says: "Sealed orders are orders given to the commanding officer of a ship or squadron that are sealed up, which he is not allowed to open until he has proceeded a certain length into the high seas; an arrangement in order to ensure secrecy in a time of war."

Jewett to Fields -- [*April 1882*]* Monday noon

My own dear darling, your letter makes me wish to fly to you. There is one thing about it all; it seems to have been done to make you surer than ever that the love still holds and follows you -- You were sure already, and it does not seem to me that this was needed, but -- here it is! And I think you are right in your saying that there shall be no more of it -- no more, I mean, of your going outside to find what is your own and will come to you at any rate. It is simple curiosity that sends most people to mediums; if one has need of these revelations they will come unsought. I never shall forget that morning last winter when that message was told me for you as you sat writing at your desk -- But for Celia this will work wonders, if only her imagination is not fascinated and excited by the wonder and mystery of it. I think we should hold it as sacred a thing as possible for her sake and help her to reverence it, and not dream of degrading it into a mere satisfaction of curiosity. Thank God for anything by which a human soul is helped to see more clearly the reality of our spiritual life in this world or the next!

Note

April 1882: While the year almost certainly is correct, the month is less certain. Other letters from March and April of 1882 indicate that Jewett and Fields at this time visited at least one spirit medium, separately and perhaps together.

Whittier to Fields -- 28 April 1882

The news of Emerson's death* has just reached me. How our friends glide from us! I begin to feel awfully alone. And yet sometimes those who have gone away seem very near to me. Or is it that I am getting very near to them! --

Note

Emerson's death: Ralph Waldo Emerson died on 27 April 1882.

Thaxter to Fields -- 29 April

You dear! How I think of you! Did I not tell you how your pendulum would swing back into great joy from that deep dark?* Always it is so. For me -- some how all things are new -- it is a new heaven, & a new earth -- the old joy & elasticity of childhood comes back once more --

Note

deep dark: In addition to sympathizing with Fields's "messages" from her husband, Thaxter seems to respond to Fields's two periods of depression, late in 1881 and again near the anniversary of James T. Fields's death, in April 1882. Indeed, this letter may refer directly to Thaxter to Fields of 30 October 1881.

Jewett to Whittier -- 5 May

Yes, I find too that Mrs. Fields begins to dread the going away, but that day at Concord* tired her very much and she is altogether tired out at any rate. I think, in her wish to drive away her sadness, she has tried to carry too much care and work, and she feels the burden of it beside the weight of the sorrow itself. She needs more than ever to have this change and rest.

Note

Concord: Jewett and Fields attended the 30 April funeral of Ralph Waldo Emerson, a

Concord MA resident, who had died on 27 April. At this time, they were planning a long healing trip to Europe. While this letter says nothing about communing with the dead, it informs about Fields's state of mind and health at the time that she consults a medium.

Thaxter to Fields -- 14 May

How glad I am to have your letter telling me of your visit to Mrs P.!* How interesting it all is! How good you are to tell me! The Pinafore* is going to Ports. to take poor Bernt Ingebertsen,* my poor sweet little Antomina's father, to Somerville -- Poor child, her heart is almost broken & I ache for her -- it is a terrible hard place for her to get over & while I try to cheer her I feel all the time how hopeless it is -- Time -- time -- that is all -- Time will soothe her sorrow{.}

I am so glad Rose & Mr Darrah* have met & "talked it over"! I want to hear from Rose, & shall try to get time to write. -- I heard from the dear owl* & I wrote -- but oh, we seem so far away! days & days before we get a mail! Everything, all time, is so uncertain, without the postman most especially!

The song sparrows are singing thro' all this cold storm-- what a cold storm! Like December-- Julia's* garden & mine are chilled & discouraged -- but the sun will shine by & bye --

Dear Annie I cannot realise the time is so close for your going* -- dear me, whatever shall we all do when you are away! Don't get too tired before you go -- easy to say, but hard to prevent, I know -- but do remember what J.* said, Flower dear.

Notes

1882: Boston Public Library places this letter in 1882. This is reasonable because Thaxter refers to Fields going away for some time and refers to recent séances Fields has attended; Fields and Sarah Orne Jewett sailed for Europe in May 1882.

Mrs P: Probably this is the spirit medium, Jennie Potter, whom Thaxter mentions in her letter to Fields of 24 May. Though little is known about Potter, several others have recorded encounters with her. See *Light* 1:1 (1881), p. 78, and *Facts* 2-3 (1883) p. 164.

Pinafore: Thaxter's brothers, Oscar and Cedric Laighton, owned a steam tug that ran irregularly between Portsmouth, NH and Appledore in the Isles of the Shoals, where they operated a resort hotel. Thaxter spent her summers there, helping with the work.

Bernt Ingebertsen: This name is sometimes spelled "Ingebretsen." Norma Mandel, in *Beyond the Garden Gate* pp. 80-3, names the Ingebretsens as among the early Norwegian immigrants on the Isles of the Shoals. Ingebertson apparently has been living on Smutty-nose, one of the Shoals islands.

Mandel notes that several members of another family, the Berntsens, suffered from mental illness.

Mina Berntsen is mentioned often in *Letters of Celia Thaxter* (1895). The use of names is confusing. Mandel says that Mina Berntsen was the daughter of Ben Berntsen, but this letter seems clear that she is a daughter of Bernt Ingebertsen. Mandel identifies the Ingebretsons and the Berntsens as different families.

Somerville, MA was then home to the Asylum for the Insane, now the McLean Hospital.

Rose & Mr. Darrah: The context makes clear that Thaxter refers to her friend, Rose Lamb. Rosanna/Rose Lamb (1843-1927) was a prominent American artist. Lamb, like Thaxter, was a student of William Morris Hunt. Annie Fields memorialized Robert Kendall Darrah (1818 - 22 May 1885) in an obituary.

Thaxter seems to be collecting impressions from her various friends who have consulted Mrs. Potter, including Fields, Lamb, Darrah and Jewett.

owl: A nickname for Jewett.

Julia's: Julia Laighton, wife of Cedric Laighton.

your going: Fields and Sarah Orne Jewett sailed together for Europe on about 24 May 1882

J.: James T. Fields, deceased husband of Annie Fields. And here Thaxter refers to Fields by one of her nicknames, Flower.

Thaxter to Fields -- 18 May

How near the time comes! I am so sorry I can't stand on the wharf & wave to you and owlet to the last glimmering speck -- Strange to say I like to do this thing, like to hold on to my loves as long as light will let me, till distance devours them from me. I had a letter from Mr. Whittier -- he says he is coming here in June, or first July. Your ears should have shut about that time! He seems to be satisfied with us & our belief! I shall love to see him -- But, dear me, I think there will never be any summer --! Something is the

matter with the world & the weather! the bitter east never ceases blowing & the sun won't shine -- Our gardens are blighted with frost, Julia's & mine. She sent to Vick* (and now Vick is dead, too!) and got roses & lilies & daffydowndillies, her garden is full, but deary me! not a blink of warmth or sun! But she's so happy, she needs no sun, tho' her plants do. I wish you could have seen her & my mother* last night planting a waterlily in a tub by the garden fence! It was a subject!

Notes

Vick: James Vick (1818-1882) was a Rochester, NY seedsman. He was editor of the *Genesee Farmer* and *Vick's Illustrated Monthly*.

my mother: Thaxter's mother died in November 1877, five years before this letter. Her mother would have to be an apparition.

Thaxter to Fields -- 24 May (the day Fields & Jewett sail for Europe)

I would give the world to go to Mrs Potter* now! I had a letter from Rose with a message from W.M.H.* -- it was a most interesting letter -- I think Rose's experiences are more striking than any one's. She spoke of Mr D.* & his joy in it all -- I am so glad they have this great comfort! W.'s message was Remember me to Celia -- I know how lonely how lost & how hungry she is, but she is going to have very near communication with her mother who is most anxious for it for her sake, not only intellectual communication such as you are having & she has had, but absolute, actual, tangible manifestation of her existence".

I have had a terrible note from Lizzie Greene* entreating me to "escape from the contagion of this thing"! "You cannot think seriously of it," she says. {"}If you cannot say no, do not write to me at all!" My devoted friend of years! Well -- such is life. She does not know, that's all.

Notes

Mrs Potter: Probably Thaxter refers to a public medium then working in Boston, Jennie Potter. Though little is known about her, several others have recorded encounters with her. See *Light* 1:1 (1881), p. 78, and *Facts* 2-3 (1883) p. 164.

Rose ... W.M.H. ... D.: In her letter to Fields of 14 May, Thaxter said she was pleased that Fields had consulted Mrs. P., presumably Jennie Potter. In that letter, she reports receiving accounts of sittings with Potter from Jewett, Rose Lamb, and Robert Kendall Darrah (1818-22 May 1885). Lamb has conveyed to Thaxter a message from the American artist William Morris Hunt (1824-1879), a deceased friend and mentor for Thaxter, Lamb and Darrah's wife, Ann Sophia Towne Darrah.

Lizzie Greene: Thaxter corresponded with a Lizzie/Lizzy Greene, but this person's identity is not yet known. There was a Lizzie Greene living in Boston at this time, Elizabeth Martha De Witt Wellington Greene (b. 1842). She was estranged from her second husband, Duff Greene.

Thaxter to Fields and Jewett -- 30 May

How glad I was to get your little line from the ship yesterday! O what a good time you must be having! I had a letter from Rose who spoke of J.* -- he came for a moment in the greatest spirits & said he must fly back to "her" -- she was all cuddled up with rugs & things in such a cold place! & he must fly back & watch her --"* Wasn't that dear? Did Rose tell you?

Note

J: Thaxter reports on a séance in which Rose Lamb received a message from James Thomas Fields.

Jewett to her sister, Mary Rice Jewett -- 20 June

They all seem so glad to see Mrs. Fields but it brings up so many old associations. I couldn't help thinking how sad it was for her at the Dickens* last night, but nobody would ever know, she is so lovely and thoughtful for other people.

Notes

Dickens: While in London, Fields and Jewett visited several family members of British novelist, Charles Dickens (1812-1870), who had been a friend of James and Annie Fields.

Thaxter to Fields -- 27-8 June

28th And Mr Whittier came today with Phoebe & two cousins* & oh, but he was charming! I told him all my tale -- "Ah," he said, "I knew something beautiful would happen to thee"! And his eyes were wet -- The dear sweet soul that he is! What a pleasure it was to talk to him! He could not hear enough -- he was so eager for every word -- "I am so glad, so glad!" he kept saying{.}

Evening. And all the long evening he has been here & we have talked again all the evening & he has just gone -- O so much of you & owlet* & with so much affection! Your dear dainty ears must have burned all that long way off. I have been so happy with it all! I had a dear note from poor Hattie Lowes Dickinson* telling me of her mother's death, poor child -- I wonder if you are in London & if you have my letters -- Rose* is arriving Saturday -- that is almost here -- we are going to sit together -- I dare say nothing will come. -- but W.* told her he could come very near if we sat together in the little room I had fixed; & he danced for joy that she was coming here! Dear J.* comes now & then rushing flying from you for a moment to tell us you are well or whatever (he told us of the span of discomfort you had on the steamer) but never can stop more than a minute, grudging any time taken from you.

I am going to write soon as Rose comes. Mr D.* is coming too. This is only a word to send you Mr Whittier's love & mine, to you & owlit dear.

Notes

Phoebe & two cousins: Joseph Cartland (1810-1898) and Whittier's cousin Gertrude Cartland (1822-1911) accompanied Whittier on his summer vacations, and Whittier lived in their home at Newburyport, Massachusetts most of his last fifteen winters.

Phebe Woodman (1869-1953) was the adopted daughter of Whittier's cousin Abby Johnson Woodman (1828-1921). See *Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier* v. 1, p. 337.

Owlet: A nickname for Jewett. At the end of the letter, Thaxter apparently changes to a dialect spelling.

Hattie Lowes Dickinson: Probably Hester Fanny Dickinson (1865-1954), daughter of Lowes Cato Dickinson (1819-1908), British portrait painter and Christian socialist, founder of the Working Men's College of London. He married Margaret Ellen Williams (1824-1882).

Rose: Rose Lamb. Because there has been confusion about the name "Rose" in Thaxter's letters, I repeat identification of her. So far as I have been able to determine, Rose Lamb is the only person named "Rose" to whom Thaxter refers in these letters about Spiritualism.

When Thaxter says they will "sit together," she means that they will attempt to contact spirits of the dead. She goes on to recount Lamb's report that in recent "sittings" she has heard from "W." who is probably American artist William Morris Hunt (1824-1879) and J. who is James T. Fields, Fields's deceased husband.

Thaxter seems to say that she and Lamb will make this attempt without the aid of a spirit medium. In Thaxter's letters to Fields of May 1882, she reports the results of sittings in Boston with the medium, Jennie Potter, where both Hunt and Mr. Fields communicate "from beyond."

Mr D.: Robert Kendall Darrah (1818- 22 May 1885), whom Annie Fields memorialized in an obituary. During May 1882, Mr. Darrah and Rose Lamb regularly joined Thaxter at sittings. I repeat this information in order to minimize confusion when Thaxter uses initials to identify people.

Fields to Whittier -- 28 June, writing from England.

[Reflecting on her visit to Alfred Lord Tennyson and his family on the Isle of Wight, she remembers previous visits in company with her husband.]

It was such an unspeakable pleasure to me to find myself with the friends we both so truly admired and loved, to find my dear one tenderly remembered and whom to see with all the loss and fading that there is no real change. I loved to feel that I was making the hope of our reunion more permanent -- that inasmuch as we have cared for each other sincerely here the hope is greatened of our meeting elsewhere. It was for this that I went to see them, that I might cement for all of us this old friendship.

Whittier to Fields -- 30 June

I cannot tell thee how interested I have been in Celia's accounts of the wonderful spiritual intimations. We have had long talks on the subject. She is very happy in the full belief that dear hands of love have reached out to her from "the abode where the immortals are."*

Notes

immortals are: Whittier quotes from British Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822), from his ode on the death of fellow poet, John Keats, "Adonais." However, Whittier quotes the apparently altered final line of the poem. Shelley wrote:

> The soul of Adonais, like a star,
> Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

The version Whittier presents may have originated in an essay on Alfred Lord Tennyson by Richard Hazlitt in *A New Spirit of the Age* (1844) v. 1. p. 195, where the final lines are given:

> The soul of Adonais, like a star,
> Beacons from the abode where the immortals are.

Thaxter to Fields -- 2-4 July

Rose & her brother* came last night to my great joy -- It was a stormy N. Easterly passage, but she stood it pretty well. She brought me so many messages. O dear, I wish there were nobody here but us two! -- She said dear J.* always comes, hurrying from afar, from you, to say a word & flit again -- She said my mother* wanted the 'boys" to realise how she was here just the same as ever only she could walk about now & go every where & it was so beautiful! "Couldn't she walk?" asked Rose. "Not for years before she died, except from her chair to her bed", I answered -- "Was she very stout?" asked Rose, "Because she said she no longer had the weariness of it to bear & that heavy body no longer troubled her -- {"} Now how should Rose or Mrs P.* know any thing about all that? Had it been me, the doubters might have said "it was in your mind"-- Neither of those women knew about it. She said she was laughing & sympathising just as ever, only we could not see her, but her presence was as real a fact -- I do believe it!

4th July.

Rose & I sit together as we were bid -- O Annie, we feel them, -- we are sure of it as if we saw them! Rose did not till last night, here in this little parlor, it was full of them, just as they said they would come -- I felt them all the evening while I was talking to various people, all the time these touches like cool flame crept all round & over my hands & arms: there wasn't a whisper of air stirring outside, & nothing open except the door with the tall screen before it. After all the people had gone I said to Rose how strong it was, never so strong before. "I wish I could feel it," she said, so wistfully, but she never had. It grew so intense with me that the tears rushed into my eyes. Suddenly Rose said, "it has come! it has come to me too!" & we stood together & just let the luxury of it overflow us -- O Annie it was too heavenly! We are so happy -- Rose's brother said to her this morning, "I think it is doing you so much good here, I dont see why you shouldnt stay here another week"-- That's what they told her she had better do, stay longer, & she said, "but I cant --" "Don't bother your little head," they said, "we will arrange it -- " And she is so pleased at this, &, of course, so am I! Mr Darrah wrote last night that Mrs Wild,* Hamilton's mother was very low, going -- & so he could not come down till the last of the week, -- but if Rose stays still another after this, we shall have our good time together in spite of fate.

I do not feel as if J. were here, much, I am sure he is with you. But there are such troops! Till we went to sleep last night we felt them. Rose sends her love to you. She wrote to you did not she, of J.s speaking through Sarah?* to you!

Notes

Rose & her brother: Rose and Horatio Lamb.

J.: James T. Fields, Fields's deceased husband.

mother: Thaxter's mother, Eliza Rhymes Laighton, died in 1877.

Mrs P.: Probably Jennie Potter. Rose Lamb's "messages," then, have come during her sittings with Mrs. Potter.

Mrs. Wild: Hamilton Gibbs Wild (1827-1884) was an American portrait and landscape painter. His mother was Hannah Hall Robinson Gibbs Wild (1803- 20 July 1882).

Sarah: Sarah Orne Jewett.

Whittier to Jewett -- 3 July

I found Celia Thaxter a great deal interested in her spiritualistic experiences. I hope {she} will not be too much so. She feels certain that her mother lives and loves her. I hope she will be satisfied to rest there, and not pursue investigations which cannot help her in this life. We can safely trust our Heavenly Father in regard to the conditions of the future life, if we are blest with the assurance that a future life really awaits us. For myself I am content to wait during the little time allotted me.

Did C.T. tell thee about her visit to what is called a "materializing medium"?* It seems she saw, or seemed to see, a dear friend of mine, & an acquaintance of hers Horace Currier* of the law firm of Hutchins & Wheeler of Boston who died two years ago. She is very positive as to the identity. He had a remarkable face & head, and I cannot conceive of anyone being able to counterfeit it. She had no thought of him at the time, and when he came toward her she trembled from head to foot, & cried "Why! Horace Currier!" The figure bowed its head twice

in assent. It is very strange but it passes my capacity of belief.

Leaving this ghostly subject I must tell thee that I read thy last story with a satisfaction only second to that of seeing the writer.

Notes

materializing medium: In the 19th Century, spirit mediums were central to Spiritualist practice. A spirit medium facilitated communication between the spirits of the dead and living people. Materializing mediums went a step further, bringing the dead into the presence of the living as quasi-material presences, making the dead visible and even allowing physical contact with the spirits of the dead.

Horace Currier: This transcription is uncertain, and this person has not yet been identified. The Hutchins & Wheeler law firm has worked in Boston since the 19th Century. See *The American Bar* (1928), pp. 430-1.

Whittier to Fields -- 14 July

How can I thank thee for the graphic description of your visit to the Isle of Wight, and strange and picturesque Clovelly, and the venerable Morwenstow, with its Norman tower looking as the rare, old vicar* did, into the ocean's mystery. Since reading it, I seem to have been with you all the way. Did John Oak* or his mule seem aware that they were carrying a third passenger, like the boat man in Uhland's ballad,* and did you pay "double fee" on my account? It was very kind in thee to take so much time from thy needed rest and give me this great pleasure.

Notes

old vicar: Robert Stephen Hawker (1803-1875). Whittier, Jewett and Fields all admired *The Vicar of Morwenstow: A Life of Robert Stephen Hawker, M. A*. (1880) by S. Baring-Gould.

John Oak: Jewett's letter to Mary Rice Jewett of 2 July 1882 recounts the story of their trip to Morwenstow, in which they took a basket carriage pulled by a donkey, with the boy John Oak as driver.

Uhland's ballad: Whittier refers to "Neckar, The River: The Passage" by the German author, Johann Ludwig Uhland (1787-1862), in which the narrator crosses a river with two invisible passengers: "... Invisible to thee, Spirits twain have crossed with me."

Thaxter to Fields -- 20 July

Rose & I sit every day & are very happy -- conscious of soft hands about us in the darkness & silence. We never are ready to leave the charmed darkness -- it is too sweet. Rose thrives: she looks so well & happy. Mr. Darrah still lingering with the Wilds

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Thaxter to Fields -- 23 July

Rose & I have wonderful times with our experiences, at all hours, under all circumstances -- We find ourselves touched in all sorts of ways, sometimes so startling that we pause in the midst of rapid talk in a room full of people & are hardly able to speak another word. This happened so impressively to Rose last night when she was saying some thing about the Swedenborgians* who never mourn for their dead, feeling they are always near -- "I wish I felt as sure as they" she said. At once her hand was clasped so distinctly that she lost her head entirely & did not know one word of what she was saying, whether it was sense or nonsense -- Tho' it happens every day we never get used to it -- it is just as delicious & wonderful every time -- Various people have said to me "I hear you have altered your opinion about Hunt's death* & no longer imagine it to have been voluntary -- Is it so? & why then have you changed your mind?" Then I sound them, & if I find I can tell them, I do it -- I have not the least wish to evade the declaration of my belief, but you know how it is -- I told Mrs Bowditch & Jo Burnett* of my own personal experiences & found them intensely interested & quite ready to accept it. Of course if I hadn't known they would be I should not have told them --

Miss Kate Fox* is in London. I have a friend here who is personally acquainted with her{.}

Notes

Swedenborgians: Lamb refers to the New Church (Swedenborgian), based upon the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), particularly, perhaps, the doctrine of an intermediary stage after death and before a final judgment that determines one's eternal destiny.

Hunt's death: American artist William Morris Hunt (1824-1879) was believed to have drowned himself on Appledore. Thaxter discovered his body.

Mrs Bowditch & Jo Burnett: Dr. Henry Ingersoll Bowditch (1808-1892), owned a cottage on Appledore. His was wife, Olivia Jane Yardley (1816-10 December 1890).

Jo / Josephine Cutter Burnett (1830-1906) and her husband, Joseph Burnett (1820-1894), were the parents of Edward Burnett (1849-1925), who married James Russell Lowell's daughter, Mabel Lowell. The Lowells were friends and correspondents of Fields and Jewett.

Miss Kate Fox: Probably Kate Fox is Catherine Fox (1837-1892), youngest of the notorious Fox sisters who are credited with the founding of Spiritualism.

In 1882, this Kate Fox, then the widow of H. D. Jencken, was living in London.

Thaxter to Fields -- 2 August

The summer scampers -- Mr. Darrah went yesterday, full of enthusiasm about our cherished secrets. Rose had a letter extending her absence to the 15th! She laughed -- it has been the queerest thing how the whole matter has been quietly managed. She has not lifted a finger -- meant to stay here 3 or 4 days at most, & see how everything arranged itself.

Jewett to her mother, Caroline Jewett -- 14 August

Mrs. Thaxter didn't mean that I wrote{,} only that she heard from me. Mrs. Fields writes her very often so I send messages and have only sent her two or three notes since I have been away!

Thaxter to Fields -- 7 September

I hope you will see the mystic people* in London!

Note

Among the mystic people Thaxter has in mind, one probably was Catherine Fox (1837-1892), youngest of the Fox sisters.

Thaxter to Fields -- 12 September

Annie! I have felt & seen my mother's hands. I have been clasped by her, she lifted & rustled the long heavy satin ribbons I wore at my throat, her hands stole round my neck up to my head & on my forehead I felt her beautiful soft fingers, palpable, distinct. -- I wept -- I could have died of joy! I did -- almost! My last doubt is blown to limitless nothing -- J.* wrote "Tell my dear wife, tell her I wait to lay my hand upon her, bring her here --" O Annie how to begin to tell you! Let me try to gather my wits together -- Last week in the tremendous pour I went out to 25 Mt Pleasant Avenue to find Mrs Philbrick* to whom I had been told to go: found a nice house, superior to Appleton St, & a gentle, lady-like, quiet person answered to the name of Mrs Philbrick, again an improvement on Appleton St. It was too late that aft. so I said I'd come next day between nine & ten. At the minute I was there -- we went up stairs to a little attic guest-chamber, all furnished in blue, she drew out a little common pine table -- she had half a dozen light large slates. We sat down, two hands holding each other, two holding the slate* -- In a moment, raps! of all sorts each as different as human voices, all over the table. I thrilled -- I was bidden ask questions, by the raps they were answered -- who was there, -- then writing on the slate began vehemently, & no pencil in the room! Furious writing & when it was ended the slate was pushed to me by no visible hands. It was from J. W.* he said I was one of his dearest friend & helpers & that the great charity I had for him did him a world of good & so on. He touched me strongly on both arms & forehead & with an inexpressibly solemn & beautiful gesture bowed my head forward laying his whole hand upon it heavily{.} He said he depended on me to help him still, some one to dare to speak & help this truth that should so illuminate the world -- that he regretted hedging up the pathway with his cold investigations, &c -- &c -- oh, more than I can tell you -- my dear, dear Annie -- I cannot tell you half -- I cannot wait till I see you! I was almost wild with excitement -- Mrs P. had to beg me to be calm, me!!! But they were as excited as I: it was all tremendous --- when I left after two hours of that pressure, I felt as if {I} had died or been born or something as wonderful -- I walked on air, -- oh it was indescribable! I could not wait for Rose -- she was at Nonquit -- she came yesterday -- I rushed for her & made an appointment for this morn{in}g. She was not prepared for what happened, tho' I had told her all -- W^{m} came -- my mother & W^{m}* & Mr W -- all touched us together, we not only felt but saw their hands & arms! -- Rose was frightened, oh so very much! She cried out, "O I cannot bear it, I cannot bear it" -- We saw them plainly. The writing was splendid -- I save it all to show you -- so characteristic{.} Rose's mother,* so sweet! & Sophia D. & Lucretia Mott* & some strangers -- Mr W. said, when he first came, "W^{m} is here" but he always feels the cold wave on which he went out whenever he comes near the earth" -- Now isn't it strange, they seem to come back thro' the same door thro' which they went away. Then W^{m} said, "I shall never forget the Isles of Shoals & that cold wave on which I went out! I always feel it when I come near you, every time" -- The time

before, the first time I went I begged Mr Weiss* over & over to tell me the old name he used to call me, but he did not. The first thing today which he said was this -- "I was so eager, so earnest the other day I could not stop to notice what you asked; I had forgotten that old time levity & that I used to call you grandmother, ha, ha, Celia! I knew you would come again. I have so much to say to you. W^{m} is here & must speak" & so on. O dear, it was all so real! I said, "Where are you, grandfather, what are you?" The answer written swift as lightning, "The same spirit that went away clothed upon with a new body which I shall not abuse as I did the one I left."! We said, Rose & I, tell us what to do -- "Dare to speak for us, for the truth you know" was the answer, "help us to let this light on the world, this happiness, Dare to do it" -- I said, shaken to my very heart, "I dare. I will bring every one, speak to every possible one" -- my arm was struck several times so strongly we all heard it & it tingled for a long time -- & oh gloriously the touches came all about me! "That same unhindered, unlimited, strength & power you put into all your work, that I call for from my new home & claim your aid & your love --" I said "& you shall have it!" It went on, the writing -- "Now you know, grandmother you sometimes used strong language, sometimes would roll out swear words{.} But I like your courage!" O Annie it is impossible to tell you in any kind of sequence -- I mix everything up -- I cannot express to you my joy -- my delight, the peace, the rapture of it all. -- I said "It is rapture", & it was written "And Rose is afraid! Well, I will wait till she can bear it." That was about the touches --

Notes

J.: James T. Fields, deceased spouse of Annie Fields. Note that with this medium, James Fields's position has changed. Jennie Potter consistently placed him in proximity to Fields in Europe, but making brief flits to the Boston sittings. Mrs. Philbrick places the spirit of Mr. Fields in Boston and asks that Annie Fields be brought to him.

Careful study of this letter will reveal other surprising oddities about the dead, such as John Weiss's forgetfulness and their general eagerness to make direct contact with the living.

Mrs Philbrick: This identification is purely speculative. Mrs. Philbrick *may* be Mary Hinds Stevens Philbrick (1833-1906). She became a disciple of Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910) in 1884, during the early years of the Church of Christ, Scientist. Her husband was George Albert Philbrick (1832-1917). Her association with Christian Science was not without controversy.

It appears that previous to Mrs. Philbrick, Thaxter had been visiting a medium on Appleton Street in Boston, but this person's identity also is not yet known.

the slate: A more detailed description of Mrs. Philbrick's method appears in *Some Reminiscences of a Long Life* (1899) by John Hooker, p. 252.

> A few years ago I went with a friend in Boston (a Congregational clergyman, who was much interested in the investigation of spiritualistic phenomena) to a Mrs. Philbrick, a woman in whom he had confidence, and who seemed to me to be trust-worthy, who was, however, a public medium. I was introduced to her by my friend, but she knew nothing whatever of me except my name thus given her. In this case I used her slates. An open slate, with a bit of pencil on it, was held under the top of the table, she holding it on one side of the table and I on the other, her other hand laid on the table, and my other hand on hers. The gas was turned wholly off, or so nearly so that the room was dark. Soon the scratching was heard. After it stopped and the gas was turned on, we found a long message, nearly filling the slate, addressed to my wife by her first name, and signed "P. W. D," the initials of the name of a dear friend of hers who had died a year or two before. What is noteworthy here is, that while the communication seemed to come almost certainly from Mrs. D., it yet stated that a certain person (whose name she gave) would soon come over. This person has since died, but not till nearly ten ,years after this. After this we took other slates and in the same way got several messages from departed friends, another to my wife, one to myself signed by a familiar name, and I think two to my friend. Those intended for myself or my wife were characteristic, and alluded to incidents that a stranger could have known nothing of. I could fill many pages with such statements. There would be none, however, more striking than these. I have regarded the theories of mind-reading and of fraud as entirely at fault as explanations of these phenomena. If the matter written had been in my mind, so that the medium could have read it all there, how could it have been got upon the slate? But the matter, so far from being in my mind, was every time a surprise to me.

For an explanation of how slate writing may be accomplished, see *Spirit Slate Writing and Kindred Phenomena* (1898) by Chung Ling Soo.

J.W.: American clergyman and author, John Weiss (1818-1879), was a Thaxter family friend as was William Morris Hunt. It seems likely Thaxter refers to him as one of the spirit visitors at this sitting. She also refers to him as Mr. Weiss, and probably this is the person she also calls Mr. W. See also "Digital Library of Unitarian Universalism."

they: Thaxter seems clear on the point that the only living persons at this first sitting were herself and Mrs. Philbrick. "They," therefore, must be the spirits with whom she communicates.

W^{m}: The context of the letter seems to make clear that William is American artist William Morris Hunt (1824-1879).

Rose: Rose Lamb's mother was Hannah Dawes Eliot Lamb (1809-1879).

Sophia D. & Lucretia Mott: Sophia D. probably is the American painter, Ann Sophia Towne Darrah (1819-1881), wife of a mutual friend, Robert Kendall Darrah (1818-1885).

Lucretia Coffin Mott (1793-1880) was a prominent American Quaker social reformer, particularly involved with the abolition of slavery and with women's rights.

Thaxter to Fields -- 18 September

James* asked me to write to you again. I saw Mrs P. yesterday. He said, "It is yet some weeks before they return = write to her, won't you? & tell her how well I am satisfied with all that has been done, that they have both gained so much in many ways, & all is as I wished, that the homecoming will be safe & well," & he laid particular stress on this, "Tell her I have continually spoken to her through Sarah,* that I still do so, -- she doesn't realise it, but it is the greatest pleasure to me that I have been able to do it --" And he talked a great deal about it. They all came with such a rush! Mother bringing Aunty Lunt who was full of solicitude about "Emily{,}"* W^{m}* saying how delighted he was with our summer & its results, how faithful we had been sitting as he bade us, & saying, "I heard you when you called me, Celia, so often, & I was delighted"-- Now that is a fact -- I called him aloud when I was alone, for it seemed to me he was nearest (after my mother) there -- He said it couldn't be told how much good it had done, though we perceived so little result from our patience & perseverance. "You have been so patient," he said -- O & so much more! It was just as breathlessly interesting as ever -- The "lady Darrah" & Mr Longfellow & J. W.* who talked most solemnly to me -- J. said "give my love to my dear wife, & you are going to be nearer together than ever before, & it will be such a comfort to you both" -- wasn't it sweet, dear? . . .

I hope you can see those mystic people in London!

Notes

James: James T. Fields, Fields's deceased husband. Later in the letter, she refers to him again as J.

The first part of this letter recounts the results of a series of Spiritualist "sittings" in which Thaxter participated during the time Fields and Sarah Orne Jewett traveled together in Europe.

All of the people Thaxter names presumably were dead, except for the "medium," Mrs P., who should be Mrs. Philbrick, mentioned in previous letters.

Sarah: Mr. Fields has communicated that he wants his wife to know that since his death, he now speaks to her through Sarah Orne Jewett.

Aunty Lunt ... *"Emily"*: "Emily" almost certainly is Emily F. de Normandie (1836-1916). Her husband was a Unitarian minister, James de Normandie (1836-1924). Perhaps her name appears in quotation marks because she is a living person, about whom the deceased Aunt Lunt expresses concern.

Aunty Lunt probably is a relative of Mrs. De Normandie's grandmother, Ann Lunt Jones, but she has not yet been identified.

Wm: Presumably William Morris Hunt (1824-1879).

"lady Darrah" & Mr Longfellow & J. W.: Darrah is probably the American painter, Ann Sophia Towne Darrah (1819-1881).

American poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who died 24 March 1882. J.W. probably is American clergyman and author, John Weiss (1818-1879).

William Eglinton to Jewett 9 October 1882

While in Europe with Fields, Jewett wrote to British spirit medium William Eglinton to arrange a meeting. We have his letter to her agreeing to meet when the couple returns to London from

Paris. It is not yet known whether such a meeting took place. See Jewett to Fields of 23 November below.

Jewett to Fields -- 23 November

(I am all alone just now for Grandfather and Mary and Mother are all out and I wish I had you here for an hour all to myself --) Why shouldn't it be like the wise East Indian who came calling on young Eglinton* on the high seas? It would be a great astonishment to Sandpiper* if I learned how to travel in that way and sometimes 'lighted down 'forninst' her. Tell Pin* three things when you write again, if you liked anything in the report of the Psychic Society and if Miss Adams liked her bonnet, and if Miss Guild* appeared to like her flowers that we carried that day in the rain{.}

Notes

Eglinton: William Eglinton (1857-1933), a British spiritualist medium, who was exposed as a fraud several times, notably in a series of publications in the journal of the Society for Psychical Research in 1886-7. Abdullah / Abd-ū-lah, one of Eglinton's "controls," was a large bearded "East Indian" who materialized often during Eglinton's performances. See also *'Twixt Two Worlds: A Narrative of the Life and Work of William Eglinton* (1886) by John Stephen Farmer.

Sandpiper: Nickname for Celia Thaxter.

Psychic Society: Society for Psychical Research, an organization that sought a scientific basis for Spiritualist phenomena, and that often found itself debunking popular spiritualists such as William Eglinton.

Miss Adams ... Miss Guild: Miss Adams is the eldest sister of Annie Adams Fields, Sarah Holland Adams (1823-1916).

The transcription of "Guild" is uncertain, as is this person's identity. A Back Bay neighbor of Annie Fields was Fannie Carleton Guild, who was the principal of Guild's and Evans' Commonwealth Avenue School in Boston.

Whittier to Fields -- 6 December

I have read with renewed interest the paper of R. D. Owen.* I had a long talk with him years ago on the subject. He was a very noble and good man: and I was terribly indignant when he was so deceived by the pretended materializer "Katie King". I could never quite believe in "materialization", and had reason to know that much of it was fraudulent. It surely argues a fathomless depth of depravity to trifle with the yearning love of those who have lost dear ones, & "long for the touch of any vanished hand."*

Mrs Thaxter told me something of your session on Saturday.* I shall hope to hear more when I see thee.

Notes

R. D. Owen: Robert Dale Owen (1801-1877) was a Scottish immigrant to the United States, who became a politician, notable for his work in establishing the Smithsonian Institution. Like his father, Robert Owen, a textile manufacturer, he was a utopian, who in later life became a spiritualist. For an account of Owen's experiences of the materializations of "Katie King," see Amy Lehman, *Victorian Women and the Theatre of Trance* (2014), Chapter 13.

"*any vanished hand*": Though these words have been quoted and paraphrased repeatedly in both prose and verse, almost certainly Whittier refers to Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem, "Break, Break, Break" (1835, 1842), the penultimate stanza:

> And the stately ships go on
> To their haven under the hill;
> But O for the touch of a vanished hand,
> And the sound of a voice that is still!

Whittier may have written "a vanished hand" or "any vanished hand." His handwriting in this letter is more than usually hurried.

Saturday: Whittier reference to a "session" in this context suggests that Fields has attended another séance or sitting.

1883

Whittier to Fields -- 10 January

How kind it was for thee and dear Sarah* to be with us yesterday morning! Indeed it was a great comfort to sit beside you while the last services for my brother* were performed; and to feel that, if another beloved one had passed into the new life beyond sight & hearing, the warm hearts of loved friends were beating close to my own. You do not now how grateful it was to me!

Notes

Sarah: Sarah Orne Jewett.

brother: Whittier's brother, Matthew, died on 7 January 1883.

Fields to Whittier -- 22 January

Sarah Jewett was pleased the other night to meet Mr. Crawford, the author of Mr. Isaacs. He is but twenty-eight years old. It appears that Ram Lal is really Koot Hoomi the famous man who is spoken of in England nowadays and whose letters are to be read in a book called Sinnett's Occult Science in which Celia Thaxter is now deeply interested….

What an unusual experience mine is to have this dear sweet child brought as it were directly into my arms! I think nothing indeed I know that in no possible way could I feel so assured day by day of the divine love and the nearness of the unseen.

Dear friend, our love and that other love is with you making the days possible and sometimes even beautiful until the end -- I know it because I feel it day by day.

Notes

Crawford: American author, Francis Marion Crawford (1854-1909) was the author of *Mr. Isaacs, A Tale of Modern India* (1882). Ram Lal appears in this novel as an Indian spiritual adept.

Sinnett's: WorldCat does not list *Occult Science* by Alfred Percy Sinnett (1849-1921) appearing before 1883. It seems likely that Fields refers to *The Occult World*, published in 1883. Sinnet dedicated that book to Koot Hoomi Lal Singh. In the book, Sinnett quotes extensively from his correspondence with this Mahatma, who is said to be one of the founders of the Theosophical Society in 1875.

The Wikipedia article on Koot Hoomi or Kuthumi notes a lack of verifiable information about this person and considerable skepticism about his actual existence.

Thaxter to Whittier -- 12 February

I send another wonderful chapter. This is perhaps the most [amazing *?*] of them all, it comes so clear --

Do not think I am being taken off my feet, in that I give all this undue thought. I never go out of my way for it, if it comes I take it, as I do every other thing in life -- It never interferes with anything else in any way, only I feel it in in a beautiful undercurrent which buoys me over difficult places & puts strength & patience into me. Do not fear, my good & faithful friend --

Notes

chapter: Probably, Thaxter has written an account of her experiences with Spiritualism. In a letter to Annie Adams Fields of 3 April 1885, Thaxter reports that she has been writing an account of her recent Spiritualist sittings.

Fields to Whittier -- 25 March (Easter Sunday)

We have been to church and heard a man who comes from Michigan, a Bishop, by the name of Harris.* His text was from St. Paul* where he speaks of ['Christ *corrected*] who is alive"! To us who have lately thought of this subject it was evident that Bishop Harris is what we call a spiritualist and it was strange to hear such things said to a conservative audience in Trinity Church. I fancy the larger number of hearers "did not mind much"; in the old days I, for one, would not have understood. I cannot be sure how far the Bishop carried his faith into the lives of people about him but after explaining how Christ was alive and present with us in the spiritual body he said that the promise was we should live with him. The phrases were all out of St. Paul and the ears of the multitude were so accustomed to them that they did not seem shocked or struck with wonder, but the Bishop himself was greatly in earnest about this companion and comforter who was so near us and who was seen two or three times after his ascension and in a manly fashion he tried to make the people understand.

I wonder if you know Bishop Harris -- I wonder how far he carries this faith and what experience he has had. We were both deeply impressed by his discourse -- it was a sign of the times indeed.

Note

Harris: Clergyman and author, Samuel Smith Harris (1841-1888) became the second Episcopal Bishop of Michigan.

Whether Harris entertained spiritualist ideas is not yet known. The term "spiritualism" does not appear in a posthumous collection of his writings, *Thoughts on Life, Death and Immortality* (1891).

Whittier to Fields -- 5 May

The volumes of Mrs Carlyle's letters* came duly, & I have been reading them with no common interest. What a strange sad revelation! What a tone of desperation in these letters, thinly disguised by the common phrases of "Dearest," and "O my dear husband." There is no sincerity

in these professions. They did not love each other so much as they loved and pitied themselves. Carlyle loved nobody, & nothing and I do not find that Mrs. C. was much different {.} Neither of them seems to have had any faith in God or immortality. But how bright & witty, and "canny" some of these letters are! What expletives "more forcible than pious"* she uses! I wonder whether she & Carlyle didn't swear at each other sometimes. What can these two be doing in the new life? --

Note

Mrs Carlyle's letters: In April 1883, Fields and Jewett sent Whittier *Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle, Prepared for Publication by Thomas Carlyle* (New York, 1883), 2 vols., edited by James Anthony Froude.

In his notes, Pickard says that Whittier later revised his judgment of Jane Carlyle, saying that she was "'cut out' for a very noble woman."

Whittier to Fields -- 10 May

I am sorry to find that the hard winter has destroyed some handsome spruces which I planted eight years ago, and which had grown to be fine trees. Though rather late for me, I shall plant other trees in their places, for I remember the advice of the old Laird of Dombiedike to his son Jock: "When ye ha'e nothing better to do, ye can be aye sticking in a tree: it'll be growin' when ye are sleeping."* There is an ash tree growing here that my mother planted with her own hands at three score & ten. What agnostic folly to think that tree has outlived her who planted it!

Notes

sleeping: See Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), chapter 8 of *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* (1818). Whittier has slightly altered the passage.

With this letter, Whittier enclosed a newsprint clipping of his poem, "What the Traveller Said at Sunset," which comments with some directness upon the living seeking commerce with the dead. Probably the clipping is from *The Independent* of 17 May 1883.

The shadows grow and deepen round me;
I feel the dew-fall in the air;
The muézzin of the darkening thicket
I hear the night-thrush call to prayer.
The evening wind is sad with farewells,
And loving hands unclasp from mine;
Alone I go to meet the darkness
Across an awful boundary-line.
As from the lighted hearths behind me
I pass with slow, reluctant feet,
What waits me in the land of strangeness?
What face shall smile, what voice shall greet?
What space shall awe, what brightness blind me?
What thunder-roll of music stun?
What vast processions sweep before me
Of shapes unknown beneath the sun?
I shrink from unaccustomed glory,
I dread the myriad-voicéd strain;
Give me the unforgotten faces,
And let my lost ones speak again.
He will not chide my mortal yearning
Who is our Brother and our Friend,
In whose full life, divine and human,
The heavenly and the earthly blend.
Mine be the joy of soul-communion,
The sense of spiritual strength renewed,
The reverence for the pure and holy,
The dear delight of doing good.
No fitting ear is mine to listen
An endless anthem's rise and fall;
No curious eye is mine to measure
The pearl gate and the jasper wall.
For love must needs be more than knowledge;
What matter if I never know
Why Aldebaran's star is ruddy,
Or warmer Sirius white as snow!
Forgive my human words, O Father!
I go Thy larger truth to prove;
Thy mercy shall transcend my longing;
I seek but love, and Thou art Love!
I go to find my lost and mourned for
Safe in Thy sheltered goodness still,
And all that hope and faith foreshadow
Made perfect in Thy holy will!

Whittier has deleted the "ed" in "sheltered" and written in "ing", changing the word to "sheltering." This is how the line appears in his *Complete Works* (1894), pp. 463-4, and in other reprintings. The clipping is from *The Independent*, probably of 17 May 1883. See *John Greenleaf Whittier: A Biography* (1900) by Francis Henry Underwood, pp. 404-5.

Thaxter to Fields -- 8 April

Just have a word from Mrs Dickinson -- Mrs Ashley,* her cousin, was dead, she never dreamed it when she sat with you ~~last~~ that night. She had just got the news when she wrote me after waiting five days for it, her mother had been sick in bed & could not answer before -- Mrs Ashley died very suddenly -- Marion had not the slightest ideas she was gone --

She went to hear Phillips Brooks* Sunday. As she listened eagerly to what he was saying Rudolph* stood by them, (herself & Ida)* & said to her "Hear!" & then came such eloquent closing words, "Look to it that your deeds in this life be such that the spiritual body be not deformed" &c. &c. You heard it, dear Annie, what Mr Brooks said. Rudolf watched them while they listened to the preacher, smiled, & was gone -- Marion has been having a terrible time with her eyes { -- } that is why you have not seen her -- After all, the trip to Florida is coming off, I believe, tho' she was thinking of giving it up -- She caught a cold & it settled in her eyes -- I hope I shall not miss her when I go to town, but I fear -- Never mind -- she will be coming to me soon & we shall go, D. V.* to the Shoals together --

I am so glad it was really as it seemed to her that night at your house! The Scientists will call it mind reading -- but we know better --

Notes

Mrs Dickinson -- Mrs Ashley: In other letters from Thaxter to Fields, Mrs. Dickinson is identified as Marion Dickinson, a spiritualist medium, wife of Sidney Dickinson. Very likely, she is Marion Miller (1854-1906), second wife of Sidney Edward Dickinson (1851-1919). His Find-a-Grave biographical sketch indicates that at the time of this letter, he was studying and traveling in Europe, Australia, New Zealand and the U.S. See also *A Mother's Letter from Northampton, MA – 1882*.

Mrs. Ashley has not yet been identified.

Phillips Brooks: Phillips Brooks (1835-1893) was the much loved and widely known rector of Boston's Trinity Church (Episcopalian) and for a short time, Bishop of Massachusetts. He is the author of the Christmas hymn, "O Little Town of Bethlehem." Wikipedia

Rudolph: This person has not yet been identified.

Ida: This may be Ida Agassiz Higginson (1837-1935), daughter of Jean Louis Agassiz, the naturalist, a Jewett and Fields friend; or Ida Bothe, a German-born artist active in Boston during the 1880s; or Ida May Garrison (1848-1891), who married John Wilson Candler (1828-1903), a U.S. Congressman from Massachusetts, 1881-3 and 1889-91. The latter two attended sittings with Thaxter in 1884 and after.

D.V.: *Deo volente*, Latin: God willing.

Thaxter to Fields -- 19 May

In Portsmouth I met my poor cousin Albert* who is yet staggering under the loss of his glorious boy a year ago this month. And I told him what experience I had had & what I believe, & it was like the elixir of life to him -- oh he was so grateful! He has hardly begun to take any interest in life yet: for a month or more he could not hold a pen -- he looks twenty years older instead of one -- I have not seen him since his beautiful Arthur disappeared from his sight.

Note

cousin Albert: Albert Laighton (1829-1887) was the son of Captain John Laighton, who was brother to Thaxter's father, Mark Laighton. Albert's only son was Austin Arthur (1875-1882). Presumably, Thaxter has told him about her current Spiritualist beliefs about life after death and the possibilities of communicating with the dead. See Norma Mandel, *Beyond the Garden Gate*, pp. 125-6.

Fields to Whittier -- 20 August

I was rejoiced to see Celia looking so well. The signs of the blow had almost passed away. I think though of Karl and the continual difficulties she encounters for him and with him, are worse for her strength than the fall.

She gathers great courage and peace and endurance with her new faith -- It is beautiful to see.

A marvellous new book has swum into my ken -- "Esoteric Buddhism"! A very hard name, but it is not so hard as the mysteries with which it deals; and yet there is a great deal of wondrous light in the book. I shall try to bring it when I come.

Notes

Karl: Thaxter's disabled son.

fall: In the summer of 1883, Thaxter suffered a dangerous fall, injuring her head.

Esoteric Buddhism: Alfred Percy Sinnett (1849-1921), *Esoteric Buddhism* (Houghton Mifflin 1883).

Thaxter to Fields.-- 23 September

And oh & oh I have read every word of Esoteric Buddhism* & it is more interesting than any novel & tho' I occasionally had to grab my head with both hands, I finally got an idea of it -- I should like to remember something of the lives I've lived before this one! O Annie, what a

troublous life! As you say, if it were not for the thought of its brevity, it would be too much to wrestle with its difficulties -- "Tangled webs"* indeed! I believe you! Yes, it is a comfort that we are going on together, you & I! You dear --

Notes

Tangled webs: The proverb, "Oh what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive," appears in Sir Walter Scott's 1808 narrative poem, *Marmion* (p. 345). Whether Thaxter intends this allusion may not be clear; perhaps she is thinking of concepts such as "karma" and the "veils of illusion."

Thaxter to Fields -- 14 October

I heard from Mr Darrah whom I sent to 30 Worcester Square.* I fancy his experience is something like yours -- certainly very unsatisfactory -- That is the fifth person I have heard from -- two of the five (or rather 3 of the six) being amazed & delighted, the other four disappointed & disgusted -- I fear if I get to see him* I shall join the latter band!

Notes

30 Worcester Square: *The Banner of Light* of 12 August 1882, listed among Spiritualist lecturers, "W. J. Colville, inspirational orator and poet, 30 Worcester Square, Boston. Mass." Listed at the same address was Mrs. E. E. Welch. Colville edited a pair of books on Spiritualist subjects.

him: Thaxter seems to refer to a person who can be seen at 30 Worcester Square, presumably a Spiritualist.

At this time, another prominent person of interest to Thaxter was visiting in Boston, the Indian spiritual leader, Protap Chunder Mozoomdar (1840-1905). However, he stayed at the Hotel Vendome, a considerable distance from 30 Worcester Square. See *The Life of Protap Chunder Mozoomdar* (1927) by Suresh Chunder Bose. See Whittier to Fields of 13 October.

Jewett to Whittier -- 24 October

I was "moved" up from Manchester with my dog Roger two weeks ago tomorrow and our last days there were very pleasant ones, for we (A. F.* and I) drove or walked a great deal. One day we went to Coffin's Beach which I had never seen before, and we took a last look at Essex which I have quite fallen in love with. It is all afloat when the tide is in, like a little Venice, and the shipwrights' hammers knock at the timbers all day long, as if all the ghosts of departed shipbuilders from all along shore were chiming in with the real ones....

I have read Miss Phelps's book* and I think most of it is very beautiful and though the sillinesses of it hurt one a little, there's ever so much to be thankful for, and I know it will do good and make vague things real to many people.

Notes

A.F.: Annie Adams Fields.

Phelps's book: In American author Elizabeth Stuart Phelps [Ward] (1844-1911), *Beyond the Gates* (Boston, 1883), a woman dreams she about dying and going to a celestial kingdom. Of notable interest in her report are the narrator's descriptions of visiting her living family after her death. While her mother, brother and other family members are comforted by her visits, they never perceive evidence of her presence, though there are some physical manifestations, like those reported in séances, changes in air temperature, slight movements, etc. Most important in the novel is her power to minister to her family spiritually, to make them feel better in their grief.

What Jewett may have thought of as silliness in the book is, of course, uncertain, but there is a good deal that one might find less than persuasive, such as the narrator's learning a universal language so she can communicate with her fellow residents. Her representation of the celestial kingdom she enters may often seem odd. See for example, Chapter 10.

Fields to Whittier -- 24 October

Elizabeth Phelps's book I have just read. It seems to me very well done and will be "deservedly popular" as the newspapers say. How interesting it is to watch the development of this great subject --

Note

Phelps's book: Elizabeth Stuart Phelps [Ward], *Beyond the Gates* (Boston, 1883), a sequel to her very popular novel, *The Gates Ajar* (1868). Both books explore ideas about a Christian afterlife.

Whittier to Jewett -- 14 November

What a baffling story the Wizard's Son* is! I am wanting to know what became of the poor Lord

& his friends under the lead of that awful old ghost.

Have thee read Elizabeth Stuart Phelps "Beyond the Gate"!* Ah! -- if we only knew! in the place of conjecture and imagination. I believe in the future life -- but the how and where!

Notes

Wizard's Son: Margaret Oliphant (1828-1897) was the popular Scottish author of *The Wizard's Son* (1884). The novel was serialized in the United States in *Littell's Living Age*, 158-160 April 1883 - March, 1884. In this novel, a young man is surprised to learn that he is heir to a Scottish lordship. Soon after, he comes under the influence of an evil ghost that is part of that inheritance. Whittier, Thaxter, Jewett and Fields all read the serialization and corresponded about it.

Beyond the Gate: Whittier seems to have forgotten that he asked Jewett this question and received her answer a few weeks before this letter. See Jewett to Whittier of 24 October.

Whittier to Fields -- 28 November

I have not heard from thee or Sarah Jewett for a long time, and begin to fear that one or both may be ill, or that you are absorbed in Spiritual Research. I am here only a day or two, and shall hope to see you before I leave.

Fields to Whittier -- 17 December

Did you ever chance to see the Life of Annie Keary* who wrote some good stories -- if not sometime I must show you the book. It is a delightful history of a woman's life.

Notes

Keary: *Memoir of Annie Keary by her Sister* (1882), a biography of British author, Annie Keary (1825-1879) by Eliza Harriett Keary (1827-1918). The following extract sheds considerable light on how Fields probably was thinking about Spiritualism at this time.

Extract from *Memoir of Annie Keary*

pp. 131-34.

She began to be made acquainted with the facts of modern spiritualism, by means of a friend who had some personal experience of them, and afterwards Annie had the privilege of getting to know a few of the most earnest and religious amongst the spiritualists themselves.

The beginning of her search into spiritualism marks an era in her life. I remember the joy that it was to her to get hold of that little clue, and the exhilaration she felt once after passing an evening in the company of some spiritualistic friends, of whom she said, "They speak of death as if it were just a door leading from one room into another, and of the friends they have lost as if they were as near and as real to them as the living." Annie was brought by spiritualism into contact with those who hoped that they were approaching the dawn of a new science, which might, whilst confirming the facts of miracles, reveal in them the working of a spiritual law as real and as predictable as the physical laws of the universe had been proved to be. As the search went on, she was certainly disappointed by the results; she often felt herself obliged to doubt the genuineness of the phenomena; she saw what temptation to deceive the exercise of mediumship offers to weak natures, as well as the danger there might be in the séance of letting evil spiritual influences flow in upon our sphere. Spiritualism, it began to seem, was a faith amongst whose votaries one found not martyrs, but many victims. The state of feeling Annie finally arrived at about it is best expressed in a letter she wrote to Professor Barrett, who in an article of his own upon the subject in the journal *Light,* October 29th, 1881, says:

> "It will be asked, Can we not find a religion, and so rest, in spiritualism? My own strong conviction is that we cannot, and in corroboration of it I will quote an extract written to me some time ago by one who knew much of spiritualism in private circles, and whose broad sympathies, delicate perceptions, and profound spiritual insight rendered her judgment on this question singularly weighty. Miss Keary writes, 'I am very variable in my own feelings about spiritualism, being sometimes as much repelled from it, as I am at other times drawn towards the investigation; but I think I have quite ceased to have any doubts that there is an avenue to fresh knowledge opened in that direction. My doubt is whether it is a right door to go in at, whether through it we may not enter into spiritual regions less high than we might attain in other ways -- I mean such ways as earnest seeking to enter into the higher spiritual life through prayer and meditation; and whether we may not be in danger of shutting the gate of the highest way by wandering into byeways. On the whole, however, I am disposed to think that scientific examination into these new phenomena must be allowable, and so I don't

feel any scruple for such a purpose in aiding anyone who wishes to enter into it, as far as I have it in my power.'"

Annie did not, it will be seen, make a religion of spiritualism, but it was a help to her in some ways. She felt that it was a bridge between the present and the past, and valued it because it confirmed the testimony which history bears to the occasional unveiling of the supernatural in the natural sphere, and gave a solidarity to the belief in these phenomena throughout the ages of the world.

Spiritualism did not seem to explain much, and it led as much downwards as upwards, but at least it touched the region of mystery and came within feeling of the breath of the unseen. Annie studied the writings of Swedenborg also, and of Jacob Boehme. Writing to a friend about them she says, "Swedenborg's theory of correspondence makes me much happier about many of the mysteries and dark riddles of the world, but when I try to put into my own words what I have learned from him, I find how vague and shadowy my impressions are. I am reading Boehme now, with the same feeling of vague edification. It is like being lifted up to a mountain-top, and seeing miles and miles of landscape indistinctly looming through tender morning light; one can hardly say what one has seen, but one comes away with the impression that there are vaster spaces and more glorious floods of light than one knew of before, and that stronger and more practised eyes than our own may measure and enjoy them; or it is like standing at the door of a lofty edifice and getting glimpses of the pillared aisles crossing and losing themselves in each other. I had rather -- had not you? -- be dazzled and confounded by the vast thoughts of such minds as Swedenborg and Boehme, than read the clear, hard cut, inadequate explanations of writers who can't see any mystery anywhere."

1884

Whittier to Fields -- 24 January

Did thee see the remarkable account of the vision of Dr. Mackie* of Philade. at the precise time of the death of his friend Dr. Sims of N.Y.? He started up & left his bed, telling his wife that he should not be down again, for he had a dream or vision terribly real. He saw his friend Dr Sims, (whom he used to call "James the Fourth' because there were three other "Jameses" in the family,) stand by his bed pale as death & heard him say, "James the 4th is dead!" He went to his office & spent the rest of the night there where a telegram reached him announcing the death of his friend.

Notes

Dr Mackie ... Dr Sims: Dr. James Marion Sims (1813 - 13 November 1883) was a well-known and eventually controversial physician, specializing in gynecology. In *Medical Record* (12 January 1884) p. A46, is an article entitled "The Late Dr. Sims and an Alleged Instance of "Transferred Impression," reprinted from the *Philadelphia Medical and Surgical Register*:

> "The daily papers tell us that at three o'clock one morning Dr. Mackey (a prominent physician of Washington) rose suddenly from his bed and began pacing the floor, which disturbing his wife she asked what ailed him. He answered that he had such a horrible and vivid dream that he could not rest after it. He had dreamed that his friend, Dr. J. Marion Sims, of New York, appeared to him, with a face like that of a corpse, and said to him: 'James the Fourth is dead.' Dr. Mackey said to his wife that the dream so depressed him that he would not go back to bed again, so he went down to his office and sat there at work until after daylight. Before breakfast a telegram was brought him announcing Dr. Sims' death at 3 a.m., exactly the hour when Dr. Mackey, rousing from his dream, had looked at his clock. Looking at it again he found that it had stopped at three o'clock. Dr. Sims was in the habit of calling himself James the Fourth, as he was the fourth of the same name in his family." The editor of the *Reporter* accepts the above as true. This may be so, but even if so, one must remember the very great possibility of coincidence. Millions of people dream that some friend is dead. In a few cases they seem to hit it. Besides, in the present case, Dr. Sims did not die at 3 o'clock A.M. but at 3:15.

Versions of this story were widely circulated in the United States and Great Britain. This may account for details of Whittier's account varying from the one above.

Dr. Mackey of Washington has not yet been identified. It may be relevant that Dr. Sims was a close friend of author and judge, Thomas Jefferson Mackey (1832-1906), who seems to have resided in Washington DC after about 1882. Mackey authored an introduction for Sims's autobiography, *The Story of My Life* (1884). He may have been related to Dr. Sims's

mother, Mahala Mackey. See *Transactions of the Annual Meeting* by the South Carolina Bar Association (1914), pp. 95-6; and "Mackey's Morphine Madness" Charleston County Public Library.

Whittier to Fields -- 2 February

I am reading the Psychical Research Reports sent me by Mr. James, with great interest. Mrs Thaxter has sent me the photo of the Hindoo missionary Mohini. The face is a very fine one -- but not strong. He looks as if he might be cheated by Madam Blavatsky.*

Notes

Mr. James .... Mrs Thaxter ... Mohini.... Madam Blavatsky: American philosopher and psychologist William James (1842-1910) was a founder of the American Society for Psychical Research, which began in 1884, with the purpose of scientifically investigating "psychical phenomena," such as communication with the dead.

Wikipedia says that Mohini Mohun Chatterji (1858-1936) was a Bengali attorney and scholar who became a prominent representative of Theosophy during the 1880s, taking his message to England and Ireland. The Theosophical Society had been founded in 1875 in the United States and later established an international headquarters in India. Among the acquaintances of Whittier, Fields and Jewett, Celia Thaxter showed a good deal of interest in "Mohini." The photo of which Whittier speaks probably is the one that appears in the Wikipedia article.

Wikipedia notes that Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891) was a Russian "occultist, philosopher, and author who co-founded the Theosophical Society in 1875." Whittier would seem to be among those who were skeptical of her views, and particularly of her work as a spirit medium.

Fields to Whittier -- 12 March

I have had a note from Elizabeth Phelps* tonight which sounds like her old self once more. She asks if I have seen Prof[r] Wood,* the celebrated English Naturalist, who it appears, is in Boston. I have not but she tells me he is a Spiritualist in the best sense and has devoted much time and thought to the study of the phenomena as developed in our time. She seems to have seen him and been moved ….

Today I have been to the funeral of Charles Dwight* whose sad life is so happily ended. He was one of the most truthful persons I ever knew and his testimony was very wonderful. He brought me a slate one day on which the name of his brother, Colonel Wilder Dwight, had been written in sunlight, before his eyes, lying on the table, without visible hand and the writing was his brother's. Of course I did not see it done; but he did do other very extraordinary things; although from the time I knew him intimately he said he seldom felt the power moving him except in silent ways which could not be interpreted to others. He felt the hands and hearts guiding and supporting him but he could not show them to other eyes. He used to say they kept him straight; that he never could have borne his hard lot, never could have carried himself though such difficult straits except for a constant sense of guidance from his unseen angels --

Notes

Phelps: Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward.

Wood: Rev. John George Wood (1827-1889). He became a popular writer and lecturer on natural history, in addition to his Anglican church work. In 1883-4, he presented the Lowell Lectures in Boston. In an obituary in Light v. 9 (1889), p. 115, he was described as "a Spiritualist of much and varied experience, ... his knowledge dated from the earliest days of the movement." Wikipedia.

Charles Dwight: Charles Dwight (1842- 9 March 1884) was a Civil War veteran of the Union Army, and he was for a time a prisoner of war. One brother, William (1831-1888) was a Union general; another, LTC Wilder Dwight, died in the war in 1862. His name "magically" appeared on the slate Dwight showed to Fields.

Whittier to Fields -- 15 March

I must thank thee right here for the pleasure of reading Annie Keary's biography.* What a white beautiful soul! Her view of the mission of spiritualism seems very much like thine. I do not know when I have read a more restful helpful book.

Note

Annie Keary's biography: Whittier refers to *Memoir of Annie Keary by her Sister* (1882), a biography of British author, Annie Keary (1825-1879) by Eliza Harriett Keary (1827-1918). For Keary's critical interest in Spiritualism, see especially pp. 126-35.

Fields to Whittier -- 12 April

For two weeks before we came away Mrs Leonowens,* the orientalist was with us. It is many years since I had seen her and since then I had come to understand many things which were not revealed before. I have been deeply impressed with her insight. Esoteric Buddhism* was no new thing to her, (though this book she had never seen) and she has beautiful things to tell of the revelations of a higher life which came to her in that far land. She made the acquaintance of Madam Blavatsky at one time though she could not make much out of her. Curiously Prof[r] Wood coming at the same time -- they drew each other out with marvelous tales. I dare say Elizabeth Phelps and Celia have written you of him, but if they have not we will talk of him together by and by.

Notes

Leonowens: Anna Harriette Leonowens (1834-1914) was the author of *The English governess at the Siamese court: being recollections of six years in the royal palace at Bangkok* (1870), which provided the source materials for *Anna and the King of Siam* (1944) by Margaret Landon, and which eventually became the musical, *The King and I* (1951) by Oscar Hammerstein and Richard Rogers. She also wrote *The Romance of the Harem* (1873) and *Life & Travel in India, being recollections of a journey before the days of railroads* (1884).

Esoteric Buddhism: A. P. Sinnett, *Esoteric Buddhism*, 1884.

Thaxter to Fields -- April - May

Rev. Wood & Rev. Savage* came to see me yesterday morning & sat together in my room two hours & a half -- it was after twelve when they left & I had just time to snatch a bit of lunch & get off to my lesson, (which I missed last Friday week because I sat with Mr. T. while Roland & his Aunt Lucy* went to the last rehearsal) & then I had to leave the studio at 3, because I had to go to Mr T. earlier, for he has not been so well, for some days, suffering intensely, from the pains in his limbs & the mocking morphine relieving for the moment only to shut despair down on him with its distressing results -- ruining digestion & appetite -- Oh dear -- I think it is dreadful -- a pull for Roland too, that makes me shrink to think of -- I came over this A. M. for I felt so anxious, at a little after 7 -- The report is, a pretty good night, but morphine, of course, had to be given --

In my present state of mind nothing less than reaching after the dead would move me enough to do what we propose doing -- I dont know if I told you, Mrs Ole* proposes coming in on Wed. & Friday nights & staying at the W so that we can go together, to the church of the Unity --* Joanna Rotch cannot get so far & back two nights in the week. She is not young, & the Binneys* are both ill, staying with her -- But she is of course intensely interested in our venture. Mr Darrah wants to come, & will, I suppose. Mr Savage furnishes the rest. I dont know who, but I trust him -- Mr Wood was entirely charming yesterday. I had no idea he <u>could</u> be so delightful as he showed himself in my sky parlor with only Mr Savage & myself.

I shall wait till after our first sitting, which I hope will be on Wed. evening next (& I <u>trust</u> poor Mr. T. will be well enough for me to be there) & then I shall run in & tell you & Pinny all about it -- if you are not gone. I dont imagine however that anything will happen for the first two weeks at all -- Shall be surprised if any thing does. Mr. Wood said they were never allowed in their sittings to utter the words "strange!" or "extraordinary!" for a tremendous bang always followed the words, no matter by whom uttered, as if to say, "<u>No</u>! it is <u>not</u> extraordinary!"

Notes

Rev. Wood & Rev. Savage: British naturalist and cleric John George Wood (1827-1889).

Rev. Wood was in the Boston area in 1883-4 to give the Lowell Lectures. *The Christian World* 29 notes that he attended a dinner for Henry George in New York on about 7 May ("A Dinner to Henry George" 8 May 1884, p. 450).

Minot Judson Savage (1841-1918) was an American Unitarian clergyman and "psychical researcher," serving the Church of the Unity in Boston (1874-1896). He published several books on psychic research, including *Psychics: Facts and Theories* (1893).

Mr. T ... Roland & his Aunt Lucy: Thaxter's husband, Levi, died on 31 May 1884.

Roland is Thaxter's youngest son. Lucy Thaxter Titcomb (1818-1908) was a sister of Thaxter's husband, Levi Thaxter.

Mrs Ole: Sara Chapman Thorp Bull was an American author and philanthropist. She married the noted Norwegian violinist and composer Ole Bornemann Bull (1810- 1880). After his death, she made her home in Cambridge, MA, and summered at a cottage in Eliot, ME. Presumably, she plans to stay at the Winthrop House on Bowdoin Street in Boston, a quiet and

inexpensive hotel used by John Greenleaf Whittier and other literary visitors to Boston.

It appears that Mrs. Bull is among those planning to attend the Spiritualist sessions of which Thaxter speaks.

Joanna Rotch ... the Binneys: Joanna Rotch (1826-1911) of Milton, MA., was an associate member of the American Society for Psychical Research in 1885-9. Her niece, daughter of her sister Elizabeth Angier (1815-1884), was Josephine Angier (1840-1914), who married William Binney, Sr. (1825-1909).

Levi Thaxter dies on 31 May 1884

Whittier to Jewett -- 6 August

You left us all too soon, at Asquam, but I was very glad of your visit. I hope you got home comfortably. We have just got here and shall probably make a brief visit to Ossipee Park* tomorrow if we feel equal to it. I have just cut from the N.Y. Evening Post a notice of thy beautiful story of the Country Doctor.* Perhaps thee have seen it, but I venture to send it, and also a very remarkable statement relating to spiritual visitations,* which I think will interest thee and dear Annie Fields.

Notes

Ossippee Park: According to G. D. Merrill's *History of Carroll County, New Hampshire* (1889, p. 398), inventor Benjamin Franklin Shaw (1832-1890) of Lowell, MA, built a large summer home in the White Mountains in 1879 and named it Ossippee Park. This became a resort. See also Coburn, *History of Lowell and Its People* (1920) v. 1, p. 356.

Country Doctor: Jewett's novel, *A Country Doctor*, appeared in 1884. Kathrine C. Aydelott in *Maine Stream* notes that the August 2 New York *Evening Post* review is reprinted from *The Nation* (31 July 1884).

spiritual visitations: Richard Cary writes that on the same day of the *Evening Post* review of *A Country Doctor* (August 2, 1884), "a letter to the editor, captioned 'Another Ghost Story,' recounted an experience similar to that of Sir Edward Hornby, an English Chief Justice, whose story was reported in "Visible Apparitions," *Nineteenth Century*, XVI (July 1884), 68-95, and reprinted in the *Post* on July 29.

Fields to Whittier -- 20 August

But I wish sometimes I were a little nearer to you for there are so many things I should like to talk over with you. Did you see that Mr. Myers,* the English writer and psychologist says that certain members of the British Association now coming to Canada have it distinctly in view to make further researches into the wonders of our composite natures? Therefore they will be coming our way -- I hope you will be well enough to talk with them for I feel as if you could really help them as much as anyone.

Note

Myers: Frederic W. H. Myers (1843-1901) was a founder of the British Society for Psychical Research. Wikipedia. For the "composite nature" of man, see his *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*.

Whittier to Fields -- 23 August

My dear friend & school-mate Mrs Pitman* of { *omitted name* } is very ill at York Beach -- something of paralysis I believe. She wished to see me but her friends thought it would not be advisable in her present state. Almost all who knew me and mine in my boyhood have passed away. I often repeat the words of Vaughan.* --

> "They are all gone into the world of light
> And I alone sit lingering here."

Notes

Mrs Pitman: Whittier's friend and correspondent, Harriet Minot Pitman died in October 1888. His obituary of her appears in J. B. Pickard, *Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier* v. 3, p. 552.

Vaughan: Henry Vaughan (1622-1695) was a Welsh mystical poet who wrote in English. "They are all gone into a world of Light!" appears in *Silex Scintilans* (1655).

Whittier to Fields -- 23 August, Evening

I note what thee say of Mr Meyer & his friends of the Association;* and am glad that experienced truth seekers by scientific methods are venturing to look into the great mystery of our time -- indeed of <u>all times</u>.

Note

Mr Meyer & his friends of the Association: The transcription of "Meyer" is uncertain. It seems likely that Whittier and Fields refer to the formation of the American Society for Psychical Research in 1885. Perhaps he refers to Frederic

W. H. Myers (1843-1901), who was a founder of the British Society for Psychical Research. In 1884, he co-authored an essay, "Visible Apparitions," *Nineteenth Century* 16 (July 1884) pp. 68-95. Perhaps Fields and Whittier are exchanging opinions about this essay, which dealt with spirit mediums' communication with the dead.

Fields to Whittier -- 9 October

The striking feature of today is the wide-spread interest in what we have called the supernatural. I am truly amazed at the new people and the new kinds of mind engaged in solemn consideration of this subject, since men of science have refused to scoff any longer but have joined the ranks of investigators.

Mrs Goddard came up here in one of those glowing sunsets and sat talking long and with some correctness about it. She has read all the books! as she says, but I am glad to see some deeper interest awaking for I am sure she will find light in it and no one can need it more. I did not relate to her any personal experiences because she is not yet ready to receive them, but I can see something dawning in her mind where formerly all has been so dark.

Note

Mrs. Goddard: This may be Martha LeBaron Goddard (1829-1888). She was the compiler, along with Harriet Waters Preston, of *Sea and Shore: A Collection of Poems* (1874).

Thaxter to Jewett & Fields -- 12 October

We will talk of Myers* &c. when I see you. I can't remember if I have spoken to you of that fine, splendid little Ida Bothe who lives with Mrs. John W. Candler* in Brookline, (because Mrs. Candler can't live without her) & has a studio in town & paints like a man, with power & truth. I fairly love this girl -- she is to me most charming. She came from Germany, her birth place, with Mrs. C -- had some trying experiences & came to make her own way & earn her living which she does triumphantly. I never saw a person so full of the real old German spirit of objection to this sort of thing -- our Subject* I mean. She laughed it to scorn. But in her own person & Mrs. Candler's, with no "Medium", the thing has come to her with such force that she says in a letter I had last week "To me this thing is now absolutely real. I shall never doubt it again .... The other night there came raps all over the ceiling (she & Mrs. Candler sitting alone) & Mrs. C. had to beg not to disturb Milly, her daughter, asleep in the next room. They stopped at once . . . . I hardly care to experiment more. For me the alone important fact is settled, & it is such a subtle, dangerous thing to handle, anyway. Some day I shall be with them & the thought of strife (endeavor) & work & development is better than annihilation, after all."

You see she believed in annihilation -- her terrible experience had crushed hope out of her.

This is the most interesting thing I know about the matter: these two people who so scoffed are now my best comforts in it. They were in our meetings at the Unity --* You must see Ida this winter -- She is most interesting -- petite, like a child, with soft brown hair & fair skin & pink color, fresh & lovely, but such a resolute face. And she talks such a charming lingo!

Notes

Myers: Possibly, Thaxter refers to Frederic William Henry Myers (1843-1901), a British author and scholar who became a founder of the Society for Psychical Research in 1883. Wikipedia.

*Ida Bothe ...Mrs. John W. Candle*r: A German-born artist, Ida Bothe was active in Boston during the 1880s. She married a German baron in 1890 and returned to Germany.

Ida May Garrison (1848-1891) married John Wilson Candler (1828-1903), who served as a U.S. Congressman from Massachusetts, 1881-3 and 1889-91. Their daughter was Amelia Garrison Candler Gardiner (1869-1945). Wikipedia.

Subject: Thaxter refers to Spiritualism.

the Unity: Presumably, Thaxter refers to the Church of Unity in Boston. See Thaxter to Fields of Sat. A. M., April - May 1884.

Jewett to Lilian Aldrich -- Autumn

I am so glad that you are at home again -- and I dont stop to think much about your having lost your Russian journey in my selfish pleasure. Somehow I have missed you this summer more than I ever did before, and I had a haunting fear that something was going to happen to you -- perhaps because you were low in your mind about going away. What a presentiment of note it would have been if it had come true, for I dont know when I have been more miserable at the thought of anybody's crossing the sea! And now for a good while to come I shall have no fear of any presentiment whatever.

Jewett to Fields -- Autumn

Does Sandpiper play with you, or has she married a ghost and therefore she cannot come?

Notes

problem with date: the letter in which this comment appears is problematic. It appears in Fields, *Letters of Sarah Orne Jewett*, where a number of the "letters" are actually composites, put together from several originals. While some material in this letter clearly is from late 1884, this comment might well come from later, perhaps July of 1885, when Jewett and Fields had ceased to trust Marion Dickinson and no longer were drawn to her version of Spiritualist faith.

married a ghost: Though Levi Thaxter died recently, on 31 May 1884, she and Levi Thaxter had lived apart for much of their married life, and he was not among those Thaxter was eager to contact for herself during the séances in which she participated.

Jewett here refers to one of the more controversial elements of Spiritualism, the concept of a "spirit spouse." Most Spiritualists believed that one continued after death as the same personal identity, but on a spiritual plane of existence. At least some Spiritualists came to believe in spirit marriage, that each person was destined to marry one particular person of the other sex. On the earthly plane, many mistakenly married the wrong person, but on the spiritual plane, these mistakes would be corrected. Following this belief, some people were persuaded that their destined spouse had died before they could marry and, therefore, with the aid of a medium, they might marry this deceased person.

See "Three Seances with Mrs. Miller," for an account of an actual wedding of a mortal with a spirit bride, *American Spiritual Magazine* (Memphis, TN, May 1877, pp. 153-4.

In *Earth's Earliest Ages: And Their Connection with Modern Spiritualism and Theosophy* (1884), George Hawking Pember explained and condemned the idea of the spirit-marriage because it lacked Biblical foundation (pp. 382-90).

Whittier to Fields -- 29 October

I have read with great interest the Reports of the British Society for Psychical Research. Dr Nichols* in the last no of his Science News and Journal of Chemistry has an able article upon them, which I send.

Mrs Beecher Hooker* came here and lectured on Spiritualism and spent the night at my house. She is a Beecher and rather cranky I imagine. I hope she will not find thee next as she is to spend the winter in Boston. She is unlike Mrs Stowe. Is Mrs Thaxter in the city? -- I heard that she was to winter at the Winthrop....

Dear friend, the very thought of your visit here makes me happy, and my house is dearer to me for it. Like the invisible boatman in the German ballad,* I ride with you all the way by Berwick.

Notes

Dr Nichols: One of Whittier's neighbors in Amesbury was Dr. James R. Nichols M.D. (1819-1888). He was the founder and publisher of *Popular Science News and Boston Journal of Chemistry*. Presumably, Dr. Nichols's article on the Society for Psychical Research had appeared in a recent number of this journal. He also was the author of *From Whence, What, Where?* (1882) on the topic of science and religion.

Mrs Beecher Hooker: Isabella Beecher Hooker (1822-1907), sister of American author Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896), was an activist in the American suffragist movement and other reform groups. For her interest in Spiritualism, see Barbara White, *The Beecher Sisters* (2008), chapter 10.

German ballad: Whittier refers to "Neckar, The River: The Passage" by the German author, Johann Ludwig Uhland (1787-1862), in which the narrator crosses the river with two invisible passengers: "... Invisible to thee, Spirits twain have crossed with me."

Whittier to Fields -- 31 October

I shall do no such thing. Santa Teresa* shall not go into the waste-basket. Her experience is that of all of us. The vision comes & in its light we write, and find when it passes that the "words are dead" and only the poor, helpless body is left. Perhaps thee may improve the poem, but it seems to me fine in conception and expression. Who that has ever seen the vision and felt the strength & hope & rapture of its blurred environment and sought to share with others the song it inspired, can fail to enter into deep sympathy with such a lament. Weep for us all if we can, in spite of the disappointment, { *missing*

verb ? } calm "inglorious, mute"* in the garden of the Lord.

I am not sure that Mrs Stowe's attempt at match-making for Sarah is not an instance of mistaken vocation. Why don't the young doctor "speak for himself"? -- if he knows her as we do he would at all hazards. Who is he? -- And is he the paragon who is worthy of her! I think thee are wise not to aid & abet the thing, for if he should propose, I dare say she would reject him, and wear the scalp of his slain affection at her girdle! _____ Just here who should, of all the world, look over my shoulder but the child herself! -- An amazing coincidence which the Psychical Researchers might make a note of. I am delighted to see her & her sister in this very hurried call.

An English lady called on me yesterday who was interested in the investigations of occult phenomena, & who hopes it will throw light on the marvel of Spiritualism.

Notes

Santa Teresa: Saint Teresa of Ávila (1515-1582) was a Spanish noblewoman and mystic who became a Carmelite nun. Fields and Jewett admired her writing, Jewett mentioning her several times in her letters and, especially, in her short story "William's Wedding." Wikipedia.

Fields's poem is not known to have been published, but she did publish an extended essay: "Saint Theresa," *Atlantic Monthly* (March 1903), pp. 353-63.

mute: Whittier alludes to stanza 15 of "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" by British poet, Thomas Gray (1716-1771). He may also allude to the Bible, Isaiah 51:3.

Whittier to Fields -- 14 November

I was much interested in thy account of the young child's visitants. I hope thee will know more of it. Did thee ever see Saml J. May's* account of what seemed to him the visitation of his young brother? It seemed to me a remarkable instance. His brother came to him and laid by his side every night for several months.

Note

Saml J. May's: Samuel Joseph May (1797-1871) was an American reformer, particularly for women's rights and abolition. Wikipedia says: "When he was four years old his six year old brother Edward died while they were at play in their barn. May claimed that the loss of his brother and the dreams he had following the fatal accident led him to devote his life to God and inspired his passion to 'rectify the world's wrongs'." For an account of May's visions of his lost brother, see *Memoir of Samuel Joseph May*, Chapter 1.

Jewett to Fields -- November

The Carlyle makes other books seem trivial, as books, just now. That cross Scotchman seemed to carry an exact, inexorable yardstick and to measure with it as if he were a commissioner from the Book of Judgment,* though everybody else ran about with too short yardsticks and too long ones. I know a Pinny and T.L.* who will go someday to Scotsbrig and Mainhill and Ecclefechan and Haddington and Craigenfuttock, that's certain --

Note

Book of Judgment: Possibly Jewett refers to *Oahspe: A New Bible*, which contains "The Book of Judgment," "being the grades and rates of mortals and angels in the light of god, as the word came to Es, daughter of Jehovih." Wikipedia says the book was "published in 1882, purporting to contain 'new revelations' from '... the Embassadors of the angel hosts of heaven prepared and revealed unto man in the name of Jehovih....' It was produced by an American dentist, John Ballou Newbrough (1828-1891), who reported it to have been written by automatic writing, making it one of a number of 19th-century spiritualist works attributed to that practice."

In Chapter 16, the voice of Jehovih speaks to Moses of sending 33 commissioners to inspect "the countries whither I will lead thee" and report on them.

T.L.: Like "Pinny" for Jewett, T.L. is a nickname for Fields.

Whittier to Fields, l December

Dear friend I am glad to read what thee says of the visit thee & Sarah Jewett made to Celia Thaxter's room.* Your feeling was right. I have longed to get something from the dear ones beyond, but I have somehow all along felt that I must wait God's time. I believe there is such a thing as communion with those who are in another sphere; and that there is in this spiritualistic phenomena, the prophecy of a coming revelation, -- but there is also much which repels & disgusts me. I am sorry that C.T. is yielding herself so unreservedly to the baffling

and unsatisfactory influence. No real good can come of it, and I am afraid her experience will be a painful one.

Notes

Thaxter's room: In J. B. Pickard's edition of Whittier's letters appears a Whittier to Fields letter of 19 December 1884, the manuscript of which is privately owned. There Whittier expresses his skepticism about the reports of Mrs. Dickinson, the medium: "In regard to our friend Celia's experience I hardly know what to think. It seems that she saw nothing, and if her friend's excitement had reached the trance state could her vision be relied upon as real? Could she even give any definite account of the glorious visitant?" (Letter 1388).

In his edition of this letter, J. B. Pickard provides an account of this meeting or perhaps another from about this time. See Thaxter to Whittier of 12 January 1885. It is not clear that Thaxter's letter recounts this particular meeting; the 12 January account of a sitting takes place in Fields's home, rather than in Thaxter's room.

1885

Thaxter to Whittier -- 12 January*

I thank you for your beautiful letter and your kind warning. Have no fear. It is not often we approach this most sacred subject. Always Mrs. D is on her guard, and they have never forced her against her will to see them. She has begged they will not come to her when she is alone, at night or any time, and with one exception, it has never happened.... Last week we went to Annie Fields. I tell this to no one but you, guard it safely -- I know you will -- After dinner we sat before the fire in the room we know and love, up stairs. Roger lay on the rug, Sarah J. at one side of the fire, Annie on the other, we opposite by the sofa, one on it. As we sat there presently I saw by the expression of Mrs. D's beautiful face that she began to see something, looked at her enquiringly. She said, "Do you wish me to tell you what I see?" We cried "O, yes!" Then she said "I see a misty something, have seen it for some minutes, moving slowly about over the rug -- presently she said "it lengthens and takes shape: it is a young man, a blond young man, he walks about, now he stoops and touches the dog." Roger lifted his head and growled! .... [Darrah observes another figure] "No, it is larger, fuller, younger man, with a fine presence," she described him -- she had never seen James, nor any picture of him, she said, "he has straight dark hair darker than his beard and tumbled at the parting" (you remember how he always did that?) "his eyes are dark, his beard is large and seems rather square, it is curly wavy and has two streaks of gray down the front" -- in short she described him perfectly and he spoke so that she could hear and repeated what he said, all beautiful and what you would expect from him, she spoke of the arch, merry, human expression, she described in her exquisite way all that passed before her, till we were all sobbing, Annie and Mrs. Lodge and I, and Pinny too was touched to tears -- while I was eagerly leaning forward by Mrs. D's side to catch everything that passed, longing for Annie to be comforted ....

Notes

12 January: Present at this event, in addition to Jewett (called Pinny) and her dog, Roger, Fields and Thaxter, was Mary Greenwood Lodge. The apparition of James refers to Annie Fields's deceased husband, James T. Fields.

The medium on this occasion almost certainly was Marion Miller (1854-1906), second wife of Sidney Edward Dickinson (1851-1919). See Thaxter to Fields of 3 April 1885. Pickard has added the material in brackets, which identifies a Mrs. Darrah as the medium; however there is no documentary evidence that Thaxter consulted a medium of this name. I examine this topic in the commentary section of this essay.

J. B. Pickard includes the above narrative in the notes to his edition of the Whittier to Fields letter of 1 December 1884.

Whittier to Thaxter -- 6 February

I agree with thee that there is something unsettling and disturbing in the changes going on in the religious world, but I believe that it is all in the ordering of Providence, and that there is a deeper more heartfelt acceptance of the Christian truth -- the vital and essential -- than ever before. He is turning and overturning whose right it is {to} reign,* and how wonderful it is to see the best minds and hearts turning turning to the great doctrine of Friends -- the Inward Light and Guide. That doctrine seems more and more precious to me. I only wish I could obey it more fully.

Note

reign: J. B. Pickard points out Whittier's biblical reference to Ezekiel 21:27.

Thaxter to Fields -- 7 February

I shall see you tomorrow D.V., but I must send a word about last night at my brother's where we went to try for Roland.* Miss Bothe, tho' far from well, came also.

My dear, it was an anguish! Nothing happened! we sat, she saw nothing, we heard naught, there was no sign -- My disappointment was so keen I could not keep the tears from creeping down my cheeks in the dark. Roland was perfectly respectful -- there seemed no reason -- everything had worked marvelously as if against fate, to procure us the sitting. At last Ida* said, "supposing you & Mrs D.* go into the dining room alone" -- we did, sat by the still white-covered table light out. No sign. I said, "I love this life, but I would leave it gladly tomorrow, tonight, to bring peace & comfort to my boy --"

We went away from the room leaving it dark, at last, & tried again in the other -- no use -- lamps were lit, we gave it up. Julia* went into the dining room & the girls (servants) had made it light. J. said, "Did you leave flowers there?" "No!" "Well, there are some withered things there" -- We went eagerly to look -- on the white cloth were scattered withered sprigs of wild* forgetmenot, a little insignificant, one might say, ugly flower, no green house wd. take pains to raise, nobody wd buy, withered as if brought from afar -- I put them in hot water -- they revived. More interesting than the most gorgeous blooms -- Roland, puzzled, carried all home, except one sprig, which I kept --

Now! Was ever anything so strange! But poor Mrs. D. fears now that nothing will happen any where -- that tomorrow night we shall get nothing! It does not follow -- & I think the withered wild flowers & the whole of last evening as surprising as any of the phenomena.

Notes

for Roland: Thaxter's youngest son, Roland, has been grieving deeply since his father's death in 1884. It would seem likely that a purpose of this séance is to contact Levi Thaxter.

Ida: Because Thaxter refers to the German-born artist Ida Bothe as "Miss Bothe," in this case she may mean Ida May Garrison Candler (1848-1891), with whom Ida Bothe resided. However, the letter does not make clear whether Mrs. Candler is present on this occasion.

Mrs D: In other letters at this time from Thaxter to Fields, Mrs. D. is identified as Marion Dickinson. Probably, then, Mrs. Dickinson is the medium for this sitting.

Julia: Thaxter's sister-in-law, wife of Cedric Laighton. This sitting takes place at their home.

wild: This word is underlined twice.

Thaxter to Fields -- 8 February

We had a wonderful time last night -- We were showered with lilies of the valley -- (they cost half a dollar a spray in the shops!) All the invisible wore them, the whole room was fragrant, full of sweetness. James & Mr W. & Mr. Thaxter, very strong, came. J.* said "Bring them together," Roland & his father, & said, "tell Roland the Science he follows is of less importance than that to which he closes his eyes."

Mr. Candler was struck dumb with the wonder of the flowers -- They were, thrown with great force from behind me & fell wet & cold against the back of my neck, brushing my cheek & falling all over table & floor. The Psychic was on the opposite side of the room -- I sent some of the flowers & leaves to Prof. Horsford* as I promised -- Mr Darrah* who was here this A.M. tells me H. I. Bowditch the younger* is coming to interview me!

O, I forgot -- I was to say that the dear little woman dares not promise this week to go to you, perhaps she could Monday night next, if you say so we will keep the night. And oh, could Rose* come? She asked me if you would let her. It seems she can arrange with Horace* for one evening & she is dying to come. Mrs D.* would not mind.

Poor little dear -- her work has got so behind hand, she is half in despair & working too hard -- I am very anxious for her! The idea of her having to struggle so! Sidney Dickinson would die if he knew it -- his father promised to take care of wife & child for him, & not a thing has that father done for them.

Notes

James & Mr W. & Mr. Thaxter ... J.: Thaxter identifies the spirits of the dead who were present at the séance she describes. James is Fields's husband, James T. Fields. Though one may pause at Thaxter using his first name and then his initial, she has, in fact, used his first name in other letters.

Mr. Thaxter, is Levi Thaxter, husband of Celia Thaxter.

Mr. W. probably is American clergyman and author, John Weiss (1818-1879), a deceased Thaxter family friend who appeared at sittings Thaxter reported to Fields when the latter was in Europe in 1882. See also "Digital Library of Unitarian Universalism."

Mr. Candler: John Wilson Candler (1828-1903) was a Boston businessman and Republican politician. His second wife was Ida M. Garrison (1848-1891). His interest in attending a séance may have been his loss of a daughter, Lucy, in 1871, or perhaps more likely, the more recent loss of his mother in 1882. See also Wikipedia.

Prof. Horsford: Eben Norton Horsford (1818-1893) "was an American scientist who is best known for his reformulation of baking powder, his interest in Viking settlements in America, and the monuments he built to Leif Erikson." Wikipedia.

Mr Darrah: Robert Kendall Darrah (7 December 1818 - 22 May 1885).

H. I. Bowditch the younger: Thaxter was acquainted with Dr. Henry Ingersoll Bowditch (1808-1892), who owned a cottage on Appledore, and his wife, Olivia Jane Yardley (1816-1890). Dr. Bowditch's brother, Edward, named a son Henry Ingersoll Bowditch (1874-1926). At the time of this letter, he would have been 10-11 years old. Presumably, this is H. I. Bowditch the younger, though this is not certain.

Rose ... Horace: Rose and Horace/Horatio Lamb.

Mrs D.: Marion Dickinson, a spiritualist medium, wife of Sidney Edward Dickinson (1851-1919). His Find-a-Grave biographical sketch indicates that at the time of this letter, he was studying and traveling in Europe, Australia, New Zealand and the U.S. See also *A Mother's Letter from Northampton, MA – 1882*.

Thaxter to Fields -- 13 February

Mrs Dickinson is going down to Florida next month with the Candlers. Our time grows short! How I hate to be separated from her, with that key of heaven in her hand!

It occurs to me to suggest to you this -- (but please realize that it is only for your sake, not mine, for I have had such endless experience, I dont need any more) that if on Tuesday night you would like Ida Bothe to come, we might have those showers of flowers, for it is unquestionable that her presence helps Mrs D.s' power in some way. I remember we have not had flowers except on the gas screw -- the flowers always coming from the opposite side of the room --

What do you say to Ida & Rose?* It would make a little battery to help the power -- but I only suggest it for your sake. I long to have you see this, but if you dont care about it, I should not think of it again....

Whittier to Fields -- 18 February

I return the wonder manuscript. -- Mrs D.* seems to be a psychic as remarkable as the "Seeress of Prevorst."* Mrs Thaxter has just sent me an account of the miraculous discovery of a fire in a drawer in Mrs D's room. Of course thee know all about it. It is absolutely amazing even in this day of wonders, and seems direct evidence of spirit manifestation. Has Prof James* met Mrs D. yet? If he is anything like his brother, he will misrepresent her. I do not however think he is. If he was originally his wife has made a better man of him.

I am sorry I missed seeing Mr. Wood.*

Notes

Mrs D: Marion Dickinson, a spiritualist medium, wife of Sidney Dickinson. To which manuscript Whittier refers is not known, but he seems to imply that it concerns the activities of Mrs. D.

Seeress of Prevorst: Friederike Wanner Hauffe (1801-1829), also known as the Seeress of Prevorst, was a German mystic who claimed to have visions while in a trance state.

Prof James: American philosopher and psychologist William James (1842-1910)

Mr. Wood: Almost certainly this is Rev. John George Wood (1827-1889). He became a popular writer and lecturer on natural history, in addition to his Anglican church work. In 1883-4, he presented the Lowell Lectures in Boston.

In Celia Thaxter to Fields of April-May 1884, Thaxter names Wood as among those who share her interest in spiritualism and communicating with the dead.

Thaxter to Fields -- 24 March

I have just heard from our poor dear little Mrs D.* who tells me of your kind visit to her & Mary Lodge's* most unkind suspicions. "O," she says, "if they had only searched me! O dear! do you suppose I am strong enough to face all the odds & finally come out victorious? Why was I, an

unbeliever, picked out to be subjected to all this distrust & all these aspersions? I was living a quiet, peaceful life, & really, I fear I want to go back to it, & leave all the rest to be made known through someone greater & better than I." But she cannot choose, poor child, & a martyr she has got to be in spite of any thing she may desire to the contrary --

I never did feel happy about Mary's being with us, tho' all seemed so well, & I fear she will do us infinite harm now by stating her opinion of our imbecility to our friends -- it is not pleasant to be thought a fool -- I dont mean, dearest Annie that she will go about calmly stating that she thinks Annie Fields & Celia Thaxter & Sarah Jewett* three credulous geese, but her point of view will make itself felt wherever & whenever the subject comes up in her presence. So I am sorry, sorry, sorry, -- but we couldn't foresee it -- I hope the sitting you will have when the Psychic* comes back from Springfield will be satisfactory, but if her mind is strained & troubled, -- I fear, I fear! No matter how eagerly she may desire it the processes are so delicate, the mind of man can not conceive them, -- we dont know what will make success, but we do know what makes failure -- Do be sure & have Ida* there, for Mrs D. leans on her & is more tranquil & at ease when she is by.

If you have not sent back to me Sidney Dickinson's letter, will you kindly enclose it to Mrs Lang* to whom I promised to show it & she will send it to me. Her people have believed in this thing some time & it was to tell her mother about it I went to her house....

{ *Postscript }* I hope you always realise, Annie dear, that when I have spoken of these things as I have often to various people, I have carefully left any mention of you in connection with it, out -- your experiences belong to you & I dont consider that I have any right to them -- Where I myself am alone concerned, or the C.s,* or people who do not care, that is a different thing --

Notes

Mrs D.: Marion Dickinson, wife of Sidney Dickinson.

Mary Lodge: Mary Langdon Greenwood (Mrs. James) Lodge (1829-1889). In "Jewett to Dresel: 33 Letters, *Colby Library Quarterly* 7:1 (March 1975), 13-49, Richard Cary says Mrs. James Lodge "was fulsomely eulogized by the *Boston Evening Transcript* on January 3, 1890 as 'the Queen Vashti of Persia, as she was, too, Priscilla of the Puritans.' She was in fact a woman of considerable presence, wit and learning, who compiled *A Week Away from Time* (Boston, 1887), new stories, translations, and verses, to which Mrs. Fields and Owen Wister contributed. She had a keen sympathy for the poor and outcast, active with Fields in founding and operating the Associated Charities of Boston. She was the first and long-time editor of *St. Nicholas Magazine* for young readers, to which Jewett [*along with Thaxter and Fields*] was a contributor. Jewett nicknamed her "Marigold" and dedicated *Betty Leicester* "With love to M. G. L., one of the first of Betty's friends." She was the daughter of Rev. Francis William Pitt Greenwood and Maria Greenwood and sister of Alice Greenwood Howe, to whom *The Country of the Pointed Firs* is dedicated.

Thaxter probably is writing about an event like the one described in her letter to Fields of 9 February 1885, during which the group at a séance is showered with flowers. Mary Lodge apparently was at this meeting, believed she saw the soaked handkerchief, and suspected Mrs. D. had brought the mysterious flowers in it.

Psychic: The identity of this psychic seems unclear. In the context of this letter, Mrs. Dickinson seems to be "the psychic," but it is odd that Thaxter refers to her in this way. Perhaps, then, there is another clairvoyant expected to return from Springfield soon.

Mrs Lang: This person has not been identified. Fields and Jewett were acquainted with Boston musician Benjamin Johnson Lang (1837-1909) and his wife, the singer Frances Morse Burrage (1839-1934), but no evidence of their connection with Thaxter or spiritualism has yet been discovered.

the C.s: It is likely Thaxter refers to John Wilson Candler (1828-1903), and his wife, Ida May Garrison (1848-1891). Thaxter may refer to a séance at the home of Annie Fields, during which the medium claimed to see and to speak to James T. Field's, Annie Fields's deceased husband. See Thaxter to Whittier of 12 January 1885. The 12 January letter also shows that Thaxter *has* told at least one other person of this event, though Whittier was their trusted confidant.

Whittier to Fields -- 24 March

I have been reading Hovey's "Mind Reading and Beyond."* That part of it which is his own strikes me as logical and reasonable.

Note

Hovey's "Mind Reading and Beyond": William Alfred Hovey (1841-1906) is the author of *Mind-Reading and Beyond* (1885). At the time of this letter, Hovey was editor of the Boston *Evening Transcript*.

Thaxter to Fields -- 3 April

Indeed I dont "feel hardly toward those who cant follow me altogether, or those who wish to try for themselves." If I did I should have to feel hardly to the greater part of the whole world. Don't think it of me, dear. The point I complain of is that Mary* makes a statement that she was sure "Mrs. D's* hdkcf was wringing wet & so she had brought the flowers in it"-- She never felt of the hdkf, & it was most unkind & unjust of her to draw her own conclusions, without examination. If that statement were true Mrs D. would be a liar & worse, & I never would touch her or look at her again. She would be worse than dead to me. I don't "feel hardly at outspoken remark", my dearest Annie, but I do feel it hard that so grave an accusation as this should have been brought. Of course, we are all seekers. I never have minded, except in Mrs. Moulton's* case, the tide of talk & suspicion, -- the thing is so big & so beautiful it is idle to notice the froth and foam of the current that has got to lose itself finally in the great sea, no matter how it fusses -- -- The amount of it is, there be those in the world who are ready for this, & there be more who are not, & its of no use to bother about the people who cant & wont & dont wish to look at the matter in its true light. Their time is farther off, that's all -- they will have to come to it finally, but meanwhile it is time thrown away to "bother" about them, as I said before. As for bringing any "bitterness", my dear Annie, I gave you all I had in that sheet of paper. I don't carry bitterness about to any great extent, don't like its company well enough. -- I had to fire up and resent an injustice to my friend, that's all. Good heavens, supposing you had been in Mrs D's place, shouldnt I have been furious for the time being, & wouldn't you have thought me pretty lukewarm if I hadn't? Marion Dickinson would no more deceive us & be guilty of such a knavish trick than you or Mary* or Pinny or I. I must say if I were she I should be a little "mad" on my own account, but she has behaved most wisely & patiently, tho' she is quick as a flash, as a general thing. She is as true as truth....

It has taken me a long time to write out all my notes of this wonderful winter & I have had lots & lots to do besides, Roland & Charley Eliot* came down Wednesday for a few days. O Annie when I look at my boy ---- it takes all the philosophy of which I am capable to face his aspect of illness -- so thin, so pale, so shadowy is he, my heart sinks -- for I dont want him to go away before me -- it isn't natural & I feel as the life to come must lack the experience of this -- I fear he is ill in every atom of his being: it is an anguish to feel it. O what would become of me if those golden doors should swing to again -- I cannot think of it.

Notes

Mary: Mary Greenwood Lodge.

Mrs D: Marion Miller Dickinson (1854-1906).

Mrs Moulton's: Wikipedia says Louise Chandler Moulton, (1835-1908) was an American poet, fiction writer and critic. For part of her life, she was a Spiritualist, as shown in "Four Strange and True Stories," *The Arena* 7 (1892), pp. 727-32. Her objections to Thaxter's Mrs. Dickinson are not yet known.

Mary: This Mary is likely to be Jewett's older sister, Mary Rice Jewett (1847-1930).

Charley Eliot: Probably this is a Harvard friend of Thaxter's youngest son, Roland. Charles Eliot (1859-1897) became a landscape architect, notable for his work on the Boston public park system and playing a role in establishing Arcadia National Park.

Whittier to Fields -- April

I wonder whether the good Bishop, whom thee heard, really believes that all our frds are still really with us, from the other side. There is a great deal of indefinite talk among clergymen about these matters, which when enquired into proves to be wholly unreal.* For myself, not having seen or heard, I believe. But, I dont wish to come in contact with professional ghost-seers. I don't want to put myself in the way of being cheated by them. Why would our dear ones come to us directly in our best moments? -- They do sometimes I have no doubt. I will possess my soul in patience for the little time I have to wait here, assured that, if my friends do not manifest themselves to me in this state, I shall soon meet them beyond.

I am glad to learn by Sarah Jewett's letter that Celia Thaxter is making pictures with brush as well as pen. She has the eye & soul of a painter.

Note

unreal: The Bishop to whom Whittier refers has not yet been identified.

Thaxter to Fields -- 12 April

I could not help smiling, tho' a little sadly, I must confess at what you say about the lunch at Helen's.* It is not for any trouble made for Mrs D.* in that way for which I have to reproach myself, but for bringing her into personal contact with people who would take Mrs. Moulton's attitude toward her, that is what I profoundly regret. Ever since these things, being too big to be kept, have been vaguely known abroad, I have made it my duty as well as delight to give this winter's experience to any ears who wished to hear it, for if known at all, I wanted it known straight, just as it had happened, But I have stuck to my own experience, what went on under your sacred roof was sacred to me, & I have carefully left out your connection with it whenever I have spoken. When Mary* at the lunch wanted me to tell of the new experience (which happened to be the fire in the bureau drawer,) I said I did not know if the time & place were fit to tell it, meaning to take her apart after lunch, but they begged me & I was only too glad to tell them as much as I could of the whole matter. Mrs. Aldrich* afterward asked me, begged to know if any thing had been heard of Mr Fields. I said "that is something I do not talk about," & she urged me no further.

I have not a shadow of doubt that Time will set Mrs D. right, four square, as Pin would say, to the world, but the chaotic state of opinion as to the phenomena in general will still exist for perhaps ages to come, for there be folk who cannot & will not accept these things, all the Psychic Societies in the world notwithstanding. They abhor & will have none of them, "tho one rise from the dead".* But life is a brief moment, & Death will prove all, to each individual.

So, as Dr Watts* advises in the hymn, I "put a cheerful courage on" & will be neither cross, nor discouraged, nor put down about the matter, but will possess my soul with a brave patience. "Let them rave".* 'Tis but a moment of time.

Notes

Helen's: From among several mutual acquaintances named Helen, it seems probable that Thaxter refers to Helen Olcott Choate Bell (1830-1918), a close friend of Fields.

Mrs D.: Marion Miller Dickinson (1854-1906).

Mary: It is next to impossible to know which of the many mutually known Marys this is. However, Mary Greenwood Lodge was present at the Fields's home, when a spirit medium claimed to see James T. Fields. As reported in letters before this one, Lodge became suspicious of Marion Dickinson, believing that she was deceiving Thaxter and other friends who accepted her as a genuine spirit medium.

Mrs Aldrich: Lilian Woodman Aldrich (1841-1927), wife of *Atlantic Monthly* editor, Thomas Bailey Aldrich (1836-1907).

Dr Watts: Isaac Watts (1674-1748) was a British Congregational clergyman and hymn writer, perhaps best remembered for his Christmas hymn, "Joy to the World."

Thaxter quotes from "Awake, Our Souls!" See *The Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs of the Rev. Isaac Watts*, pp. 312-3.

"Let them rave": Probably, Thaxter refers to British poet, Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892). His poem, "A Dirge," uses the refrain: "Let them rave."

Whittier to Fields -- 16 April

I am pained but not altogether surprised, at the intimation which has reached thee of what seems untrustworthiness on the part of Mrs D.* & Mifs B.* If there is any truth in the intimations it does not follow that there has been any predetermined deception. From all that I have known of mediumship, it seems to affect unfavorably the moral sense -- the distinction between true & false is less clear -- Mediums are first deceived themselves, & they are tempted to deceive others -- their actions have the irresponsibility of dreams: they live & move in an unnatural atmosphere where it is never full daylight nor yet utter darkness: an uncertain twilight in which things may seem which are not.

The more I think of it the more I am convinced that, for the present, the whole matter may be best left to the cool heads of the Psychical Research. The Future Life is sure -- our dear ones live: but we may separate ourselves farther from them, by consulting uncertain oracles, deceiving and deceived.

I hope Celia Thaxter is not intending to publish her notes of the "Signs & Wonders." It is safe to wait awhile. She has the assurance of the Future Life, but her record of these things will not convince others. We remember that poor Dale Owen* would have given his life to recall his statement in the Atlantic of his experience.

Let us believe & trust, and wait. "Patience" Milton says "is the exercise of saints."* And it may not be unprofitable for us sinners!

Notes

Mrs D ... Mifs B: Mrs. D. is Marion Dickinson. Miss B. probably is Ida Bothe, whom Celia Thaxter introduces in a letter to Jewett and Annie Fields of 12 October 1884.

Owen: J. B. Pickard notes that author and politician Robert Dale Owen (1801-1877) published "Touching Visitations from a Higher Life" in the *Atlantic* of January 1875.

saints: J. B. Pickard identifies Whittier's source as *Samson Agonistes* (l. 1287) by British poet John Milton (1608-1674).

Fields to Jewett -- May

By the way do not fail to read two articles in the Sunday Herald -- upon Mesmerism and Hypnotism.*

Notes

In this letter, Fields also reports that Elizabeth Stuart Phelps "has a paper ready for N A. R ." Phelps's "The Great Psychical Opportunity" appeared in *The North American Review* 141 (September 1885), pp. 251-68.

Phelps's article responds to the founding of the American Society for Psychical Research and reports on the recent work of the British society. She argues that previous scientific research in Biology and Geology has helped in understanding the history of life, where we have come from, but has contributed little to understanding human destiny, the question of "Why are we here?" She expects psychical research to begin to shed scientific light upon that question.

Hypnotism: Coverage of issues related to Spiritualism appeared with some frequency in the popular press. While I was unable to access the Boston *Herald* articles Fields recommends, I was able to read other pieces from 1885. The Boston *Daily Globe,* for example, reported on the founding of the American Society for Psychical Research, for which hypnotism and mesmerism were among the topics to be investigated. The article opened with an apparent allusion to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and perhaps as well to William Dean Howells's 1880 novel: "A company was formed in Boston last fall for the exploration of "the undiscovered country" (1 March 1885, p. 12). The article names a number of friends and acquaintances of Jewett and Fields as among the society's investigators. The society plans soon to examine "the subject of spiritualistic mediumship." Thomas Wentworth Higginson says:

> The difficulties surrounding this subject are so numerous that it will be necessary to proceed with the greatest caution. There is so much of sham, trickery and deception in the performances of professional mediums that investigations of them would be doubly difficult and less promising. They become so accustomed to deception that they often cannot tell themselves where the genuine ends and the sham begins. It is our desire to find some one who possesses the mediumistic power, but does not exercise it professionally.

In "Psychic Research," Charles Morris discusses the British society's report on investigating telepathy, which seemed to confirm that some people really possess the ability to communicate by means other than the five senses (*Lippincott's Magazine of Popular Literature and Science*, April 1885, p. 9).

Thaxter to Feroline W. Fox -- 5 June 1885*

How fares it with you? When I first heard of your pain, I thought to write to you at once, but I reflected and said to myself, "Better wait a little till the sore heart can bear a word or touch," for I think at first one longs to be left in peace: all words, however kind, are so futile ; they cannot alter the tremendous fact which overwhelms us.

To me, death is no longer dreadful; for me it has lost all its terrors; it is only a brief pain of separation from our beloved; we miss them, that is all, but oh how hard it is to miss them ! I know it all. It has grown to be no more to me than when my friend crosses the ocean to the other hemisphere. I miss him dreadfully, the days seem long till the sweet time when I shall again see him; but I know he is there, and never forgets me any more than I forget him, and that presently I shall join him, the longest time is brief: and it is said in that beautiful new life our darlings have begun, there is no time, the word means nothing to them any longer. I went to a wedding the other day, the wedding of my dear Ignatius Grossman with Edwina Booth.* Such radiant happiness I have never seen. I rejoiced with them, with the dear fellow who was like a son to me. A few days later I went to the funeral of a dear friend, Mr. Robert Darrah. That funeral gave me more happiness than the wedding had done. I looked down at the cloak of a body he

had thrown off, the well- used garment he had worn so many years, and which had served him well, but which he no longer needed, and my heart was light with joy. I was so fond of him I could only rejoice with my whole soul for him; for I knew he was safe with his dear ones, unfettered, un- trammeled, happy, and that he could not forget us, and would be sure to be ready with welcome when we escape in our turn.

Pardon me, dear friend, if I weary you with this talk, but my heart is so full of it, death seems such a different thing from what it used, such joy, such comfort, it is so sweet to look forward to; and for those who have gone on I have only rejoicing, and the consciousness of their well-being makes it easier for me to bear the loneliness without them. I know tis so brief a time before my turn comes, and I shall have all I love. I am sure you feel it, too, do you not? Send me a word and tell me how you are. I have been so sorry to think how lonely you must be ; the separation, even though we know how brief it is to be, is so hard while it lasts. But it is only to have patience a little longer, and the dear hand of your child clasps yours, and draws you away from weariness, pain, and perplexity into light and warmth and joy, and the beginning of a new and beautiful existence where all your powers are renewed and you begin afresh to live with those you love. Ah, how divine it is to think of! It is no dream, no fancy. I do not <u>think</u> it, I KNOW it is true.

God bless you, my dear friend. I wish I could comfort you, could give you the strength of my delight in all this, of my content and assurance that all is well. I wish I could make your brief loss less hard to bear. I think of you much and often.

Notes

1885: This letter appears in Annie Adams Fields and Rose Lamb, *Letters of Celia Thaxter* (1895), pp. 142-5. Almost certainly, Thaxter writes to Feroline Walley Pierce Fox (1810-1898) of Brighton, MA. Her husband was Reverend Thomas Bayley Fox, a Unitarian pastor. Their daughter, Feroline Pierce Fox died on 23 April 1885. Find a Grave.

Booth: Ignatius Grossman, a close friend of the Thaxter family, married Edwina Booth (1861-1893), daughter of American actor Edwin Booth (1833-1893). Wikipedia.

Thaxter to Fields -- 10 June

I must tell you that night before last came flowers which never grew on this island, the pink die letra, if I spell it right, -- you know it, it grows in long pink & white drooping sprays on the mainland, but none has [ever *corrected*] grown here -- Minnie* the mother came & said to our entreaty that she would bring us flowers from the little Minnie (her daughter's) garden, in Northampton -- they were perfectly fresh -- Marion saw her with them in her hands first & said they looked like sweet peas, the colors are pink & white, you know, but I knew no sweet peas could be blooming out of doors at this season -- No boat had been to the land, but the flowers came. However, it is hardly worth the [*stray mark*] while to tell you this, because [yours *corrected*] and Pinny's hearts are closed & hardened as far as Marion is concerned in all this, with the poison of Mary's* suspicions -- [*long line in left margin*] the little rift within the lute* ---- [*extended space*] I know it is of no use to tell you <u>any</u> thing where she is concerned -- But my sister has a nurse for Ruth & Margaret, a good, quiet steady American girl quite pretty & lady like & respected [by *corrected*] all.

There have been some of the phenomena connected with her, that is, raps have followed her, &c, but she never minded, her thoughts being on her work, & she has not had any thing to do with the subject. Last night Julia said "let us have Ella to sit with us" -- Her name is Ella Adams* -- So, reluctantly Ella came -- For a long time we sat in the dark & nothing happened. Marion saw nothing -- We talked quietly of various matters, suddenly Ella began to shake like an aspen & turned cold as ice & rose from her seat reaching her arms out in an ecstasy of joy & longing & excitement, she saw her dead brother, her sobs [and *corrected*] tears, her agonised entreaties to him to come near her, were something most pathetic. She rose up, clinging to us & reaching out her arms followed to where she saw his face, but he disappeared & she was heart broken -- We lighted the lamp, her face was absolutely colorless, bathed in tears. Marion did not see what she saw, as in the case of Mr. Garrison,* when <u>he</u> began to see they both saw the same things -- But later, last night, Ella saw what Marion saw, only less distinctly. We could not sit long, for the deep & deadly trance nearly carried Marion away, & left her so weak we swore we would never let her sit again while she was here -- She must rest all summer & get back all her strength --

The picture of herself & little Minnie I had put in a little gold frame & hung near my [desk *corrected*]. Saturday she had seen hands about the frame. Last night Minnie said to her, "did you see me near the baby?" Marion said, "O was it you?"-- [I *corrected*] said, "can't you do something with that picture to show us?" Marion said, "can't you turn it face to the wall, for a sign for us?" "Do something to it!" I begged. She answered she would try -- We were sitting in mother's chamber. When we left my parlor to come over here to supper, I looked round the room before I left it, the picture was hanging in its place. I saw it -- We came to tea -- stayed here till it was dark enough [to *blurred*] go upstairs & sit. After our sitting we had to almost carry Marion over, she was so gone, her face white as this paper -- drawn & dwindled, it really seemed to have lost substance -- [*extended space*] When we got over to the cottage I flew into the parlor first, lighting a couple of matches outside, which were enough to show me the picture was not on the wall - "Quick, quick,[" *so it appears*] come in", I cried to all the rest & we all saw that the picture had been taken from the nail & carried over to the table & laid on a pile of books ----

Pardon me if I bore you with all this --

Notes

Minnie: Minnie Henrietta Stockwell (1855-1877) was the deceased first wife of Marion Dickinson's husband. Marion Dickinson has communicated with Minnie Dickinson during a spiritualist trance.

Minnie Dickinson died soon after the birth of her first child, Minnie Stockwell Dickinson. At the time of this letter, "Little Minnie" was in the care of family in Northampton, MA.

See *A Mother's Letter from Northampton, MA – 1882* and Find a Grave.

Mary's: Presumably, this is Mary Greenwood Lodge.

the little rift within the lute: Thaxter quotes Vivien's song from "Merlin and Vivien" (1859), one of British poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson's (1809-1892) *Idylls of the King* (1859-1885). Thaxter's choice of allusion in this case is rich with complexity, for in this song, Vivien is attempting to seduce and betray Merlin by demanding perfect faithfulness in love.

> In Love, if Love be Love, if Love be ours,
> Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers:
> Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all.
> It is the little rift within the lute,
> That by and by will make the music mute,
> And ever widening slowly silence all.
> The little rift within the lover's lute,
> Or little pitted speck in garner'd fruit,
> That rotting inward slowly moulders all.
> It is not worth the keeping: let it go:
> But shall it? answer, darling, answer, no.
> And trust me not at all or all in all.

Ella Adams: Probably this is Ellen F. Adams (1863-1934) of Portsmouth, NH. In the clipping from a genealogical history shown at her father's Find-a-Grave page, she is listed as Ella.

This clipping shows two brothers deceased by 1885: Joseph O. (1857-1861) and Alonzo (1873-1875). Presumably, Ella sees the spirit of the latter brother, whom she would have known.

Oscar Laighton reports that Ella Adams continued working for the Laighton hotel as a housekeeper for many years after her time as nursemaid to Cedric and Julia Laighton's children. He also notes that Ella's brother, Oliver Adams, Jr., served as engineer for the Laighton's steam tug, the *Pinafore*. Two of their sisters, Ena/Eva and May/Mary, drowned in a 1902 sailing accident in the Isles of the Shoals.

Mr. Garrison: This person has not been identified, but it seems possible he is Francis Jackson Garrison. Garrison lost his first wife, Mary Pratt, and their daughter, Ruth, in 1882.

Thaxter to Fields -- 19 June

Thanks for your nice letter, it was good of you to stop in the hurry & confusion of getting settled to speak a word to me. Mrs Dickinson left us to go to New York to meet her husband the day after I wrote to you. We did not have many sittings, for that deadly unconsciousness was so prone to seize her, & it always frightens me lest she may never come back -- She ceases to breathe, almost to live -- it is a thing truly tremendous. You have never seen her in it. If you had you would never doubt her again. I am so thankful her husband will be with her now, & save her & shield her & take care of her.

Fields to Whittier -- 1 July

We are reading Swedenborg with deepest interest and I hope with advantage. A purer atmosphere seems to surround us as we read -- You will remember Emerson's paper upon "The Mystic" -- It seems to me he ^Emerson^ judges the question a little unfairly. The world does not revolve around Mrs Dickinson and if she is not

fair, there is still enough left to us without her materializations -- but it was very curious and I still think her power to deceive, if she has done so, an extraordinary one -- I never liked that form of "the thing" at all, but I am confused at the idea that such deceptions can be -- We know they can when we remember your R. Dale[Owen.

Note

Emerson's ... "The Mystic": American author and philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882). He published "Swedenborg; or, the Mystic" in *Representative Men* (1850).

Probably at this time, Jewett and Fields were reading Swedenborg's best known book on the afterlife, *Heaven and Hell* (1758).

Thaxter to Fields -- 2 July

Her husband has come home to Mrs Dickinson -- that is the best news I have. She so surely needed him. Did I tell you the comfort I had in hearing my brother Oscar say -- well -- I must tell you for I'm sure I have not -- One of the brothers of Thora Ingebertsen* was drowned here last week. Oscar, until he knew Mrs D. had never believed in any after life & was the most unmanageable skeptic on all these subjects. Ingbert was drowned off Malaga, the water was covered with boats trying to recover his body -- it was all done in an instant, the youth was careless, did not loose the sheet when a tiny puff of wind came, the boat careened, filled, sank under him & he went down, why we shall never know for he was a strong swimmer. Help, tho' it strove to reach him, came too late. Oscar & Julia & I sat on the rock on the south side of the island watching the scene quarter of a mile away. Understanding only that there was trouble, Julia & he & I had hastened over there, seizing a bottle of brandy, thinking it might be a case of resuscitating or something. But all was over when we got there -- only the boats in the calm water & the men with the grappling irons trying to find the body.

Oscar sat looking, musing -- "Poor Ingbert" he said, "half an hour ago he was here, well & strong & happy, & expecting nothing less than such a change as this!

I wonder if he knows any thing yet, if he has come to himself enough to realise it."

I can't tell you how happy this made me -- it spoke more than volumes!

Yes, indeed, I never shall forget that dear birthday in the past, when you were both* here -- How lovely it was! Thank you for your kind wishes, dear -- I dare not think what may come to me between this & my next birthday, when I think of my Roland who is growing more like a mute shadow every day. Only my belief, my faith, my actual knowledge gained this winter, preserves me from despair.

I was so interested in the cow Clarissy! How delightful! I should like to hear the Swedenborg* so much! Mrs D. does not come here now, but goes at once with her husband to his father's home in Northampton for the summer. Poor dear little woman -- her drop of bitterness, draught, I should say, in the joy of her husband's return was the thought, "Sidney is coming back to find me accused." Over & over again she said it, full of misery at the thought. To find the name so dearly reverenced coupled with lies, -- it must have been bitter for him, for them both --

Notes

Thora Ingebertsen: Malaga is a very small island south of Appledore in the Isles of the Shoals. In a *Harper's Magazine* article (49, 1874, pp. 663-76), "The Isles of Shoals," John W. Chadwick describes visiting the Shoals in the 1870s and becoming acquainted with Jörje Edvart Ingebertsen, "an old Norse viking," and his family, including daughter, Thora. Apparently at that time, young Ingbert had not been born; at least he is not named. Thaxter also writes a little of the family in "A Memorable Murder," one of the sketches in *Among the Isles of the Shoals* (1878).

Swedenborg: Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) was a Swedish Christian theologian and mystic, founder of the New Church. It appears that Thaxter refers to a lecture on Swedenborg presented at about this time. But she may refer to a recent biography such as *The Life and Mission of Emanuel Swedenborg* (1883) by Benjamin Worcester, or *Life of Emanuel Swedenborg* (1884) by William White.

Whittier to Fields -- 8 July

I like Swedenborg* in the general not in some of his details. There is what M. Arnold* calls a "sweet reasonablenefs" in his philosophy. I am hoping soon to get Dean Plumptre's* book on the Future Life, which is just issued.

Don't let poor Mrs Dickinson's voluntary or involuntary acting trouble you. The truth lies safe behind it all.

Notes

Swedenborg: Whittier may have written "Swedenberg." Still, he refers to Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772). Thaxter to Fields of 2 July 1885 suggests that some event has drawn Fields to mention Swedenborg in her letters -- perhaps a contemporary lecture or a recent book or biography.

Arnold: British poet and critic, Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), lectured in the United States from October 1883 through March 1884. Whittier presumably refers to Arnold's essay, "Literature and Dogma" (1873), Chapter 12:

But of Christianity the future is as yet almost unknown. For that the world cannot get on without righteousness we have the clear experience, and a grand and admirable experience it is. But what the world will become by the thorough use of that which is really righteousness, the method and the secret and the sweet reasonableness of Jesus, we have as yet hardly any experience at all.

Dean Plumptre's: Edward Hayes Plumptre (1821-1891) was a British author, educator and clergyman. His book on "the future life" was *The Spirits in Prison, and Other Studies on Life after Death* (1884 and 1885). Wikipedia.

Fields to Jewett -- 19 July

Edith and Richard* came up yesterday and tomorrow Ida spends with them. O their beautiful children! Somehow I keep thinking of dear Longfellow* when I see them and of what he is thinking of too as he watches them.

Note

Edith and Richard: Richard Henry Dana III and Edith Longfellow, the latter a daughter of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Ida Gertrude Beal was Fields's niece.

Jewett to Fields -- 23 July

Now comes the news of General Grant's death,* which is a relief in a way. I think nothing could be more pathetic than the records of his last fight with his unvanquishable enemy. No two men I have ever seen came up to Grant and Tennyson* in Greatness. Tennyson first, I must say that. Good heavens, what a thing it is for a man of Grant's deliberate, straightforward, comprehending mind, to sit day after day with that pain clutching at his throat, looking death straight in the face! and with all his clear sight he was no visionary or seer of spiritual things. It must have made him awfully conscious of all that lay this side the boundary. And now he knows all, the step is taken, and the mysterious moment of death proves to be a moment of waking. How one longs to take it for one's self!

Notes

General Grant's death: Ulysses S. Grant (1822-1885), Union Commander in the United States Civil War and later President. He died of throat cancer on 23 July 1885. Wikipedia.

Tennyson: Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892), the English poet.

Jewett to Fields -- August

And Mrs. Dresel's* belief about the medium was so true and lovely.

Note

Dresel: Fields's musical neighbors were Otto and Anna Loring Dresel. They moved next door to Fields in 1886. Jewett was especially close to their daughter, Louisa (1864-1958), whom she saw often and with whom she corresponded over several decades. Mrs. Dresel's comments on mediums have not yet been located.

Whittier to Fields -- 2 October

I had a rare, good visit from Dr. Holmes* & his wife, the other day. We two old boys wandered about in the woods, talking of many things* -- half merry, half sad. We were stranded mariners, the survivors of a lost crew; warming ourselves at a fire kindled from the wreck of our vessel. The good Dr is a little materialistic, but I told him to read the Reports of the Society for Psychical Research and he promised to do so.

Notes

Dr Holmes: Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. (1809-1894). Wikipedia.

many things: Whittier may allude to British author John Bunyan's (1628-1688) *The Pilgrim's Progress, Part 2*, p. 253.

Thaxter to Whittier -- 1885 / 1886

[This undated letter appears in Annie Adams Fields and Rose Lamb, *Letters of Celia Thaxter* (1895), pp. 140-2. They have placed it with

letters of 1884, but clearly it must come from after June 1885, when Thaxter turned from Spiritualism to Theosophy.]

All my life I have wondered at myself, of what my pen wrote of itself of piety and moral feeling. Now I thank God that in me lay the religious sense ready for awakening, the spiritual perception, the capacity to perceive the truth in the Scriptures, "They take up a man where he is, and leave him on a higher plane, every time he studies them."* "As soon as one knows the truth, then nothing else is necessary. Totally against all the world can bring, the man says, I stand upon the truth. How much it takes away from the load of trouble! Like water under the keel of a ship it (trouble) comes and goes; we do not mind it more. Truth gives this power. This is the test of truth within a man." So, dear friend, I am become a most humble and devoted follower of Christ, our Christ, for all races have their own Christs to save and help them, one being especially sent for us, "to call sinners to repentance and not the righteous." I understand it all now, and feel as if all my life I had been looking through a window black with smoke; suddenly it is cleared,* and I see a dazzling prospect, a glorious hope! There are two elements which Mohini brings which make clear the scheme of things: one is the law of incarnation, the rebirths upon this earth, in which all the Eastern nations believe as a matter of course, and to which our Christ refers in one or two of the gospels; and the other, the law of cause and effect, called Karma, the results of lives in the past. When salvation is spoken of, it always means the being saved from further earthly lives, and of reaching God and the supreme of joy, the continual wheel of rebirth and pain and death being the hell, the fire of passions that burns forever, the worm of desires that never die. ... I saw lovely Rachel Rowland* at the women s prison, where I went to read to three hundred convicts. We spoke of you, and she asked me, when I should write, to remember her to you. She put on my head one of the Friends caps, a real one, which she took off her own head, the loveliest thing ! I wish I could wear it always.

Notes

studies them: Thaxter's quotations appear to be from Mohini, but this has not been confirmed.

cleared: Probably Thaxter alludes to the Bible, 1 Corinthians 13:12-13.

Rachel Rowland: This person has not yet been identified. Apparently she was, like Whittier, a member of the Society of Friends.

1886 - 1888

After July 1885, Thaxter has virtually nothing to say about Spiritualism and seems to have abandoned her own practice. But letters from 1886 shows that she maintained her belief in key Spiritualist ideas as she turned toward Theosophy. The main previous idea she rejected in this letter is "meddling" with "supernatural phenomena." Whittier and Fields too continue to show interest in Thaxter's beliefs and in Spiritualism.

Fields to Whittier -- 12 April

I had been wishing to send you a word of love for your noble poem* in the "Atlantic". But the magazine remained upon my heaped up desk and other things, of little remark sometimes, but imperative, prevented me from putting pen to paper. …

Have you seen a small book which has just been printed by the Ticknors and introduced by James Freeman Clarke?*

Notes

noble poem: Fields probably refers to Whittier's "Revelation" in the April *Atlantic Monthly*. In this poem, Whittier praises the inner light of faith makes visible the divine presence in nature.

Clarke: American minister, author and abolitionist James Freeman Clarke (1810-1888) was interested in Eastern Religions.

Printed in 1886 by Ticknor and introduced by James Freeman was *Light on the Hidden Way*. In his introduction, Clarke asserts that the anonymous but reputable woman author of the volume has no connections with Spiritualists or mediums. This lends extra authority to her account of communication with the dead.

Thaxter to Fields -- 1 June

Thanks for your dear note -- I was so glad to see it coming along! Yes, oh yes, I have read all the Blavatsky business* & very nasty it seems, begging pardon of the King's English! How true it is is another question, but as Gebhard said, if Mdm B. were twenty times an impostor it does not shake Theosophy upon its

solid foundation. No, dear Annie, there is no coming to an end of this man, as I said before, he is but a mouthpiece, & what he has said has its root in eternity, there is no exhausting that. He has gone back to Germany. I thank heaven he came{.}

I send with this a copy of "The Path,"* a Theosophical Magazine which comes to me monthly, begging you to read the letter & comments marked at the back part -- when you have done with it, please send back to me. Those pages bear upon the Blavatsky business -- There are many interesting things in these magazines -- this No. is perhaps not so interesting as some of them. I don't particularly care for the "Sufi" article, but almost all are interesting generally.

The more I read, the more I learn, the more profoundly significant, helpful & beautiful the doctrines become. One saying in Light on the Path* never leaves my consciousness. "Live neither in the Past nor the Future but in the Eternal" -- There's a wonderful power of help in the way it is put.

"Before the voice can speak in the presence of the Masters it must have lost the power to wound" -- How often it saves me! -- I wish we could have some quiet talks about it, & this law of Karma which lights up every darkest corner of human existence, the inevitable law of cause & effect, seen everywhere else in the universe, & why not in human life, above all things! I am so grateful to understand about it before my life is all lived here this time! Mrs. D* is fast becoming a Theosophist, her opportunities are so wonderful. All she has seen & heard & does still see & hear are explained -- There is a girl here a nurse maid of Julia's* who has the same power of seeing in the astral light{.} If her friends are sick, dead, or in trouble she knows it at once & tells of it, & all she says is found to be correct. It used to trouble her, all she saw & heard, but she takes it quietly now, avoids it if she can, but accepts it if she must. She never talks of it if she can help it: sometimes it is too much to stand, alone, & she utters what she sees, as the other night when she saw a quiet company whom no one else could have seen, moving softly about over the grass near my cottage. Last winter she went with Julia & the children out to Mrs John Brooks'* in Cambridge for a few days. The first night she asked Julia "Has Mrs. Brooks a mother living? & is she staying here?" Julia said, "Why no, Ella, Mrs. B's mother is dead -- why do you ask?" Ella, who is very wise did not reply, evaded it, then, but when they were departing told J. of the little lady <u>in brown</u> whom she met about the house, who smiled at her pleasantly. The first time she saw her, she did not doubt for a moment it was the real living mother or some relative of Mrs. B's, staying with her. She described the figure exactly as the mother had looked -- she had never seen her.

Theosophists believe everything gets itself photographed in the astral light, "on Nature's infinite negative," as Whittier* has it, & the clairvoyant sees it all. This fifth sense* the coming race will all have developed{,} there will not be only a case here & there to puzzle the rest of those who have it not, as we have been puzzled. Did you read all of "Man, Fragments of Forgotten History?"* It is well worth your while to get it from library & read it all. I should be so thankful if you could see clearly the great frame work of this most lofty philosophy, & judge for yourself after knowing thoroughly all about it. But I don't think all the reading in the world would have helped me as the Chela's devout & earnest words have done....

June 2nd This is Karl's birthday {--} he is thirty four today. Here they all say they have never seen a creature so improved. I am so grateful for the help which has come to us! We read aloud the Theosophical books every night together -- <u>always</u> Light on the Path before we go to bed. We have just been reading Zanoni:* it is immensely interesting in connection with these things -- & now I have A Strange Story* which we are going to read together. We finished Mr. Sinnet's* novel of "Karma." Have you seen it? O I <u>wish</u> you would read it! We were entirely at home in it: there is in it just such a person as Mrs. D. with all her powers -- "Mrs. Lakesby" -- she is a real person living in N. Y. I wish it might be my lot to see her some time & have the two Psychics meet -- that wd be most interesting. Theosophists do not approve of meddling with these things which are known as "supernatural" phenomena -- they call it "intoxication on the astral plane" -- If things happen of themselves, very well, it cant be helped, but they never invite such things.

Notes

Blavatsky business ... Gebhard: In 1885, Richard Hodgson (1855-1905), an Australian born lawyer living in England, issued a report from the Society for Psychical Research on his investigation of the leading Theosophist Helena Blavatsky's claims of psychic power. His report exposed her as a fraud. Blavatsky and her friends resisted this report, leading to several years of turmoil among Theosophists.

The man to whom Thaxter refers is Mohini Mohun Chatterji (1858-1936), an Indian scholar who had acted as a missionary for Theosophy in Britain and the United States. Later in the letter, she refers to him as "Chela."

Arthur Gebhard (1855-1944) was a German immigrant to Boston. He became a leader of the local Theosophical movement, helping at one point to publish *The Path*, a Theosophical magazine. He altered his surname to Gebhard-L'Estrange.

"The Path": *The Path* was a magazine published by American Theosophists for at least a decade, 1886-1896. The June 1886 issue seems to be the one Thaxter sent to Fields. An article on "Sufism" appears on pp. 68-84. It seems likely that Thaxter refers to the letter and editorial reply on pp. 93-4.

Light on the Path: British Theosophist Mabel Collins (1851-1927) published *The Light on the Path* in 1885. Thaxter quotes from pages 15-17.

Mrs. D: Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, Thaxter remains close to Marion Dickinson, though it appears Dickinson no longer practices as a medium.

Julia's: nursemaid: Almost certainly, this is the Ella Adams who appears in earlier letters.

*Mrs John Brook*s: This person has not been identified. Possibly, she is Hannah Williams Dana Brooks (1817-1908), wife of John Warren Brooks (1815- 10 April 1886).

Whittier: Thaxter quotes from Whittier's "The Palatine" (*Poems of John Greenleaf Whittier*, pp. 310-11).

> Do the elements subtle reflections give?
> Do pictures of all the ages live
> On Nature's infinite negative,
> Which, half in sport, in malice half,
> She shows at times, with shudder or laugh,
> Phantom and shadow in photograph?

fifth sense: Presumably Thaxter meant to write "sixth sense."

"Man, Fragments of Forgotten History": *Man, Fragments of Forgotten History* (1885) was originally published as by "two Chelas," one eastern, the other western. The authors were Mohini Chatterji and Laura Carter Holloway (1848-1930).

Lili Lehmann: Thaxter spelled the first name as shown. Lilli Lehmann, born Elisabeth Maria Lehmann (1848-1929) was a German operatic soprano who shone particularly in the works of Richard Wagner (1813-1883).

She performed Mozart, Wagner, and Liszt with the Boston Symphony Orchestra on 29 May 1886.

Zanoni: British author and politician, Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer-Lytton (1803-1873) published several novels dealing with the occult that became popular with Theosophists. These included *Zanoni* (1842) and *A Strange Story* (1850).

Mr. Sennet's: Alfred Percy Sinnett, (1840-1921) a British Theosophist author, published *Karma: A Novel* in 1885. Mrs. Lakesby is a principal clairvoyant in Sinnett's novel. Thaxter means that Mrs. Dickinson is a "real-life" version of Lakesby.

Whittier to Fields -- 11 June

I hope thee may have an opportunity to talk with Prof Wallace* in regard to his experience and experiments in the matter of spiritualism. One is weary of cranks and pretenders, and those who "divine for money" and a truly scientific investigation, impartial and loyal to truth, must be worth hearing.

Note

Prof Wallace: Whittier refers to British naturalist and author, Alfred Russel Wallace (1823-1913), who in November 1886 began a 10-month lecture series in the United States on a variety of topics, mainly on Darwinism, but also on Spiritualism.

Fields to Jewett -- Late Fall

Dear Sandpiper came to dinner tonight and was entirely like her old self only many times more so! She was delightful. Mohini is reading the Baghavat Gita to a class of five of which she is one. She says he is a wonderful looking creature and his exposition of the poem is absorbingly interesting --
If Mrs Waters* should send for me I should certainly go if it were only to put myself into relation with this new personality and to feel his influence -- But I have no reason to suppose she will do so.

Note

Waters: Edwin Forbes Waters (1822-1894), owner of the Boston *Daily Advertiser*, was an author and traveler. He and Clara Erskine Clement (1834-1916) hosted Mohini for a year in 1886-7. See Gopal Stavig, *Western Admirers of*

Ramakrishna and His Disciples (2010, pp. 452-3). See also Find a Grave.

Fields to Jewett -- Late Fall

I met Sandpiper … walking out of Mohini's reading with the Baghavat Ghita under her arm!

Jewett to Fields -- about 8-15 December, shortly before Whittier's 17 December birthday.

The dear friend [Whittier] was so glad to see me and we sat right down and went at it -- and with pauses at tea time the conversation was kept up until after ten -- He was even more affectionate and dear than usual and seemed uncommonly well though he had had neuralgia all day and made out to be a little drooping with the assistance of the weather and coming company! But oh my dear Fuff how rich we are with thy friend for a friend -- He looked really stout for him and his face was so full of youth and pleasure and eagerness of interest as we talked, that it was good only to see him.... He was full of politics but we also touched upon Wallace and my old granduncle whom he used to know in Bradford, grandfather's brother, and we talked about Burns and thy friend's "Aunt Jones" who believed in witches, ...

Notes

Wallace ... grand uncle... Burns: Almost certainly, Wallace is Alfred Russel Wallace (1823-1913), mentioned in Whittier's 11 June letter.

Which of Jewett's grand-uncles Whittier knew at Bradford (Massachusetts?) is not known.

"Aunt Jones," who believed in witches probably was Mary Chilton Whittier (1816-1857), who married a Charles Jones (1809-1854).

Fields to Whittier -- 5 November 1886

I have exchanged a few words with Dr. Wallace* and heard his first lecture. I shall be likely to see him again more profitably. The lecture was noble. Brave because he did not refrain from mentioning his unpopular deduction from his study and experience --

Notes

Dr. Wallace: In November 1886, British naturalist and author Alfred Russel Wallace (1823-1913) began a 10-month lecture series in the United States on a variety of topics, mainly on Darwinism, but also on a topic possibly of greater interest to Fields, Jewett and Whittier, spiritualism.

Fields to Whittier -- December 1886

The Journal of Chemistry has interested us very much. How unforeseen this present condition of things -- that the scientists themselves should be the men to bring testimony to these things.

Mohini* is going on with his class on the Baghavat Gheeta. He seems to be really a spiritual leader and giving his pupils insight into truth. He is a strange looking man very black dark with long curls over his shoulders and thin wasted hands.

Thaxter to Fields -- late 1886 or early 1887

I crept out to the talk about the "Song of Songs "* yesterday & saw Mohini, like a keen ray from the central sun & heard his words of fire that burns not, but saves, fire that heats not, but lights the mind. Do you remember what Schiller* said to the unknown author of the "Bhagavat Gita" on first reading the poem? --

"Thee first, most holy prophet, interpreter of the Deity, by whatever name thou wast called among mortals, the author of this poem, by whose oracles the mind is rapt with ineffable delight to doctrines lofty, eternal, and divine, thee first, I say, I hail, and shall always worship at thy feet."

Notes

Song of Songs: Usually in the United States, this would refer to "The Song of Solomon," a book in the Old Testament of the Bible. However, in this case, Thaxter indicates that the lecture she attended was given by Mohini; therefore, it is likely that she refers to the "Indian Song of Songs," the *Gita Govinda*.

Schiller: German polymath author Johann Christoph Friedrich (von) Schiller (1759-1805). Thaxter apparently is mistaken about the source of the quotation, as a number of reviewers and editors attribute it to German poet and critic, August Schlegel (1767-1845), translator into Latin of the Sanskrit Hindu scripture, *The Bhagavad Gita* (Second Century BCE). The quotation varies slightly from source to source. Its origin in the works of Schegel is never given and has not yet been located.

Fields to Whittier -- 29 June 1887

Whisper it now -- but I hear that Mohini* is likely to become a Romanist -- This is between ourselves just now! The fathers see his gift and are striving to make him theirs -- What will Celia* do !!

Note

Mohini: Mohini is not known to have converted to Catholicism.

Thaxter to Whittier -- 10 November 1888

I wish you had Mohini's translation of the Bhagavad Gîtâ, with every word in it made lucid as crystal, or that I were near enough to run in & spend an hour with thee now & then & read it aloud! I think the heavenly introduction Mohini has written for it, is as helpful as the book itself. Do send & get it! If I were anywhere where I could reach it I would send it. The print is large & clear. In my copy I have written out in the margin all the verses from our Scriptures quoted by Mohini, which are often couched in the very same language as in the Bhagavad Gita. "Truth is one" -- Falsehood is folly and many, but Truth is One.

In my copy of Molinos the preface is written by J. Henry Shorthouse who wrote John Inglesant, & he says of the calumnies with which the world tried to blacken Molinos, "the real charge was that he had been a man of impure life, an accusation which has never been wanting against an enemy whom the Jesuits wished to get rid of" -- That is an accusation a blind & besotted world brought against Mohini -- it does not need Jesuits always to attack the whiteness of a soul pure as unsunned snow. "No more cruel & unjust charges could have been brought against any man," goes on Molinos' biographer. This same holds true of Mohini who was only sorry for his madness. If you read the introduction to the Bhagavad Gîtâ, & Mohini's translation of it, you would know what kind of man he was -- He has gone back to his family & is living in Calcutta with his wife & child & parents & all of them, & practicing law & doing good every instant that he lives….

How soon it will be all done! as the Sanskrit says, "Man's life is no more than a flash of lightning across the sky." I wonder who has come back again in little Charles Eliot Thaxter? I look at children now with such new intensity, beholding them chafe against our limitations, & thinking, "No wonder! A little while ago they were receiving all the honors of life!" But you are so good, I dont believe you'll ever have to come back again for the hard lessons of this world!

Notes

Chatterji's translation of *The Bhagavad Gîtâ ; or, The Lord's lay: with commentary and notes, as well as references to the Christian scriptures* appeared in 1887.

Molinos: The Spanish Christian mystic and quietist, Miguel de Molinos (1628-1696).
British Quaker novelist, Joseph Henry Shorthouse (1834-1903), was the author of *John Inglesant* (1876).
Shorthouse published *Golden Thoughts from The Spiritual Guide of Miguel Molinos, the Quietist* in 1883. Thaxter quotes from p. 23.

Charles Eliot: Thaxter's recently born first grandson, child of her youngest son, Roland, and his wife, Mabel.

After 1888

From Annie Adams Fields and Rose Lamb, *Letters of Celia Thaxter* (1895).

[Fields and Lamb describe Thaxter's period of practicing Spiritualism, pp. 139-40.]

Soon after this awakening to music, perhaps in the following year, the first intimations of a possible communication between the spirits of this world and those in the world of the unseen were aroused in her. The intense excitement she experienced made it impossible to distinguish between things true and false; indeed, she seemed to make no effort, but was exalted by every breath which came to her. At last she was rudely awakened to the untruth of some of the "mediums." Nevertheless she clung to her faith in the possibility of communication with the unseen, and found great comfort in it. Later, theosophy attracted her, especially as taught by Mohini. For the first time the world of the Orient was opened, and the vastness of this rolling sphere, as seen by the light of Eastern religion, absorbed her imagination. She saw the Divine life pouring light upon the children of men in the far dawn of time when the western world was in a sense nonexistent. The truth came to her in a garment of living poetry which Mohini interpreted. He also urged the necessity of putting aside the "manifestations of spirits," the seeking of which he considered dangerous folly. He showed how the older religion was allied to the teaching of Christ, and gave her a copy of the New Testament for her study and her guide.

From that moment her relation to the things of this world became quite changed. In the letters that follow we shall discern a spirit different and calmer, the spirit of one who has found a key into the central chamber we call Peace.

[This passage is followed by letters dated to 1884-5, quoted above, though the undated ones probably are from after June 1885, when her attention turned toward Theosophy.]

From Annie Adams Fields, "Whittier: Notes on his Life and Friendships," in *Authors and Friends* (1896).

Spiritualism, as it is called in our day, was a subject which earnestly and steadily held [*Whittier's*] attention. Having lived very near to the Salem witchcraft experience in early times, the topic was one that came more closely home to his mind than to almost any one else in our century. There are many passages in his letters on this question which state his own mental position very clearly.

"I have had as good a chance to see a ghost," he once said, "as anybody ever had, but not the slightest sign ever came to me. I do not doubt what others tell me, but I sometimes wonder over my own incapacity. I should like to see some dear ghost walk in and sit down by me when I am here alone. The doings of the old witch days have never been explained; and as we are so soon to be transferred to another state, how natural it appears that some of us should have glimpses of it here! We all feel the help we receive from the Divine Spirit. Why deny, then, that some men have it more directly and more visibly than others?"

From Rosamond Thaxter, *Sandpiper: The Life and Letters of Celia Thaxter* (1963), pp. 164-66.

When Celia was forty-seven years old, a wave of interest in Spiritualism was sweeping New England, and she grasped at it. She had long sought to understand the mystery of death, and missing her mother as she did, was tempted to fall in with a group who were indulging in table tippings and Ouija-Board seances. She hoped, through means such as these, to establish some kind of communication with her mother.

In March 1882, she and her son Roland attended "a spiritual Jam-Jam for a lark and for scientific investigation" as she wrote John. She hoped she could receive a message from that mother who had died "babbling of green fields," which she had not seen for forty years. Would her mother speak through a medium, of the green pastures of the other world?

Out of her mounting interest in Spiritualism, she wrote Annie that a certain Rose Darrah* had received a message from William Morris Hunt especially for Celia. It was: "Remember me to Celia, I know how lonely, how lost and hungry she is, but she is going to have very near communication with her mother, absolute tangible manifestations of her existence."

This was a very clever introduction bound to arouse Celia's intense interest. The thought that she would hear from her mother was all she needed and Madame Rose and her brother, Mr, Darrah, were urged to come to Appledore for the summer. At this time Celia was at low ebb, and had written that she wished she "could go -- no matter how -- I have had enough of this world!"

Now she grasped eagerly, with her usual enthusiasm, at the possibility of communicating with the next world. She prepared a little room in her cottage where she and Rose Darrah could sit together and "await experiences," which came to them as they spent long hours in the soft darkness. Celia, convinced that some communication had been established, wrote Annie Fields in strict confidence of these experiences.

Celia herself was evidently psychic, for she received many messages from various people. Weiss, who had died shortly before, called her by a pet name known only to them; Fields sent a message to his wife, and so forth.

"The scientists may call it mind reading, but we know better," she explained, and went on to tell Annie, in a letter dated June 27, 1882, that --

. . . Mr. Whittier came today. . . he was charming! I told him my tale. "Ah!" he said, "I knew something beautiful would happen to thee" . . . What a pleasure it is to talk to him. .. I am so glad, so glad. . .

In a letter to Annie dated Boston, September 26th, 1882, she described a visit to a Mrs. Philbrick, 25 Mt. Pleasant Avenue:

. . . We went upstairs to a little attic guest-chamber, all furnished in blue, she drew out a little common pine table -- she had half a dozen light large slates We sat down, two hands holding each other, two holding the slate. In a moment, raps! of all sorts each as different as human voices, all over the table. I thrilled. I was bidden to ask questions, and by the raps they were answered, who was there, then writing on

the slate began vehemently, and no pencil in the room! Furiously writing and when it was ended the slate was pushed to me by no visible hands. It was from Join Weiss. He said I was one of his dearest friends and helpers and that the great charity I had for him did him a world of good and so on. He touched me strongly on both arms and forehead and with an inexpressibly solemn and beautiful gesture bowed my head forward laying his whole hand upon it heavily. He said he depended on me to help him still, someone to dare to speak and help this truth that should so illuminate the world,* I was almost wild with excitement.

Later Celia took Rose Darrah to the same place. Rose was frightened. Messages came from many special people, at last one from Hunt who said, "I shall never forget the Isles of Shoals, and that cold wave on which I went out! I always feel it when I come near you, every time."

Celia's enthusiasm brought her comfort for the time being, and the next year, in April, she could write from Kittery: "The pendulum will swing back into great joy from deep dark. I feel the old Joy and elasticity of childhood once more!"*

Partial disillusionment came after a few more experiences of Spiritualism. She was awakened to the dishonesty of some of the mediums when one of her sons concealed himself under a table and detected a hoax in one of the seances. She wrote a letter to Mr. Joshua Blake* of Boston to thank him for a clipping and replying to a statement of his:

... It seems a contemptible cheat doesn't it? But I had a long letter from someone else to whom I sent the same. He had held the frame of the slate on one side while "P" held the other. Three persons, above the table in the light, and writing came and answers to questions! But I don't know -- I am inclined to doubt everything, and wonder if there is anything in mind reading, clairvoyance or what not.

Levi Thaxter did not share in any of his wife's Spiritualistic experiences, in spite of the fact that his friends John Weiss and William Hunt were among those from whom she seemed to receive messages. To Levi, as with Roland who was devoted to his father, science was always stronger than religion. Celia and Karl, however, were religiously curious. They read and studied together *The Bhagavad-Gita*, *The Light on the Path* and *The Perfect Way*.* To Mrs. E. F. Waters* she wrote November 16, 1886:

. . . Karl and I are still the best Theosophists* we know how to be, tho' he outstrips me every time and continually surprises me -- we bless you who turned our faces in the right direction with great fervor.

Notes

Rose Darrah: Rosamond Thaxter (1895-1989) has misread her grandmother's letters with the result that she has invented a spirit medium named Rose Darrah. The details of how she seems to have managed this appear in part 4 of this essay. That error has led every subsequent biographer I have read to affirm that Thaxter, Jewett and Fields consulted mainly just this one medium over the four years of their participation in spiritualist sittings. Their correspondence from this period shows that they consulted several mediums, none of whom was named Darrah.

This initial error by Rosamond Thaxter contributes to other errors in her account. As the letters of that time show, in the summer and early autumn of 1882, when Fields and Jewett were in Europe, Thaxter was consulting Jennie Potter, Mary Philbrick, and perhaps one other medium, possibly a male. The specific messages Thaxter passes along to Fields were received during sessions with Potter and Philbrick.

In the summer of 1882, one of Celia Thaxter's closest friends, the artist Rose Lamb, made an extended visit to Appledore. Lamb's brother, Horace/Horatio came to Appledore for part of that summer. Together, Lamb and Thaxter experienced intense contact with dead presences, but without the aid of a medium, they were unable to receive any specific messages.

Thaxter took Rose Lamb, not "Rose Darrah" to meet Mrs. Philbrick, as reported in her letter to Fields of 12 September 1882.

Also very interested and sometimes present at reported sittings with mediums at this time was Robert Kendall Darrah, a close friend of Rose Lamb.

the world: Rosamond Thaxter omits several lines between the comma and the next clause.

once more: The letter from which Ms. Thaxter quotes has not yet been collected. To whom it was addressed and when it was composed remain unknown.

Joshua Blake: This is likely to be Joshua Blake (1827-1892) of the Boston area. His parents were prominent in Boston business and philanthropy: Joshua and Sarah Stanton Blake.

The Bhagavad-Gita, *The Light on the Path* ... *The Perfect Way*: The Bhagavad Gita is a Hindu religious text from about the 2nd century BCE. *The Light on the Path* (1885) is by British theosophist, Mabel Collins (1851-1927). *The Perfect Way; or, The Finding of Christ* (1882) is by the British theosophist and reformer, Anna Kingsford (1846-1888).

E. F. Waters: Clara Erskine Clement Waters (1834-1916) was an American author of fiction, travel and art history. Her second husband was Edwin Forbes Waters, author and owner of the *Boston Daily Advertiser*.

Theosophists: Wikipedia says: "Theosophy is a religion established in the United States during the late nineteenth century. It was founded primarily by the Russian immigrant Helena Blavatsky and draws its beliefs predominantly from Blavatsky's writings. Categorized by scholars of religion as both a new religious movement and as part of the occultist stream of Western esotericism, it draws upon both older European philosophies such as Neoplatonism and Asian religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism."

Helena Blavatsky (1831-1891) also became a spirit medium while in the United States. In 1885, the Society of Psychical Research issued a blistering report on her claims: "For our own part, we regard [*Blavatsky*] neither as the mouthpiece of hidden seers, nor as a mere vulgar adventuress; we think that she has achieved a title to permanent remembrance as one of the most accomplished, ingenious, and interesting imposters in history."

Part 3 -- A Narrative Chronology focused on 1882 - 1885.

This list of events provides an overview of the material in the above letters, and it should be a helpful reference for the materials of Part 4.

Significant events before 1882

1877, 19 November -- death of Thaxter's mother, Eliza Rymes Laighton.

1878, 20 September -- death of Jewett's father, Theodore Herman Jewett.

1879, 9 March -- death of John Weiss, close Thaxter family friend.

1879, 8 September -- death of William Morris Hunt. close friend and artistic mentor of Thaxter .

1880 -- *The Undiscovered Country*, a novel concerned with spiritualism, by William Dean Howells.

1881, 24 April -- death of James T. Fields, husband of Annie Adams Fields.

In October and November 1881, after completing her biography of James T. Fields, Annie Fields suffered severe depression. During the following 9 months, Fields and Jewett formed a new, life-long intimate friendship. Fields's depression recurred near the first anniversary of James's death, as Fields and Jewett were preparing for what they hoped would be a healing trip to Europe.

1882

March -- Whittier's "At Last" counseling patience to wait until death for reunion with lost friends.

24 February -- Fields to Whittier. Appreciating his poem, "At Last." The sense of being called to Heaven by one's beloved dead is sufficient to sustain faith.

24 March -- Whittier to Fields. Mediums are not to be trusted.

24 March -- death of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, close friend of all four.

4 April -- Jewett to Whittier. Jewett's solo visit to a medium already seen by Fields, probably several times. She received messages from her father and from James T. Fields. Jewett is persuaded this was "no sham," but she has little wish to repeat the experience.

April -- Jewett to Fields. They agree that they will not consult mediums in the future, but it is acceptable for Thaxter to do so.

27 April -- death of Ralph Waldo Emerson, close friend of all four.

May - July -- Thaxter reports consulting the medium, Mrs. P, Jennie Potter.

20 May -- death of George McKean Folsom, Thaxter family friend.

24 May -- Jewett and Fields depart for Europe, returning on 25 October.

27-8 June -- Thaxter to Fields. Thaxter says Whittier approves of her Spiritualist pursuits.

28 June -- Fields to Whittier. She explains how visiting old British friends she and James shared seems to assure her of a reunion after death.

30 June -- Whittier to Fields. Whittier confirms that he has encouraged Thaxter.

2-4 July -- Thaxter to Fields. Thaxter says that James T. Fields speaks to Annie Fields through Jewett. Thaxter and Rose Lamb have experienced the "presences" without the aid of a medium.

3 July -- Whittier to Jewett. Thaxter has visited a "materializing medium." Hopes she will not pursue her interest too far.

August -- Thaxter's poem for children, "How Far Yet?" forwards the idea that at death one is reunited with lost loved ones.

September -- Thaxter reports consulting the medium Mary Philbrick, also called Mrs. P.

12 September -- Thaxter to Fields. Thaxter accepts an admonition from the spirit of John Weiss to become an apostle for Spiritualism.

9 October -- Jewett and British spiritualist William Eglinton arrange a meeting in London, but whether it occurred is not known.

23 November -- Jewett to Fields. Jewett jokes about Thaxter's belief in spirit materialization.

December -- Whittier's "The Mystic's Christmas," affirming that mystical vision is superior to material symbols for connecting with the spirit world.

6 December -- Whittier to Fields. He warns that spirit materialization often is fraudulent. Fields has consulted a medium. Thaxter was present.

24 December -- death of Ann Sophia Towne Darrah, wife of Robert K. Darrah, both friends of Fields and Thaxter.

1883

January -- Fields's "Humility" cautions against seeking knowledge beyond that normally available to humanity, suggesting that grief and care come from reaching above the mundane.

7 January -- death of Matthew Whittier, brother of John Greenleaf Whittier.

8 April -- Thaxter continues to attend séances, but there is little evidence that Fields and Jewett are doing so during this year. At this time and until July of 1885, her medium and close friend is Marion Dickinson, Mrs. D.

22 January -- Fields attributes an interest in Spiritualism to Thaxter, seeming to distance herself, but she says she feels as if Jewett has been sent to her by a loving spirit that cares for her and also for Whittier.

25 March -- Fields reports hearing an Easter sermon that emphasized the spiritualist beliefs contained in orthodox Christian faith. She and Jewett noticed this, but most of the congregation probably did not.

10 May -- Whittier sends a clipping of "What the Traveller Said at Sunset," to Fields, conveying that the desire to see one's beloved dead is an understandable human weakness, but probably not consistent with God's purposes.

20 August -- Fields writes to Whittier that in Thaxter's troubled year, she has found great comfort in her new faith. She also reports finding much "light" in her own reading of *Esoteric Buddhism*.

29 August -- Fields writes to Whittier, recommending two essays by F. W. H. Myers that contain "a recognition of the new evidences we have spoken of together."

September -- Fields's "Chrysalides" presents the idea of the death of the virtuous as a classic apotheosis.

26 September -- Thaxter's "In Autumn" expresses the desire for certainty about the afterlife.

October-November -- Whittier and Jewett exchange notes upon reading *The Gates Ajar*, a novel speculating about life after death, by Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward.

December -- Whittier's "Saint Gregory's Guest" affirms that visions from the spirit world always are possible, but we are blind to them except when God wills or enables our vision.

December -- Fields's "The Initiate" presents a sort of séance in ancient Greece.

17 December -- Fields recommends to Whittier Annie Keary's biography, with its sympathetic but critical evaluation of Spiritualism.

1884

February -- Thaxter's "A Song of Hope" expresses the faith that the speaker's love will prevail in achieving reunion with a deceased beloved.

March -- Fields to Whittier reports that Rev. John George Wood, British naturalist and spiritualist, is in Boston, and upon the death of Charles Dwight, who had recounted to her some of his impressive spiritualist experiences of materialization with her.

April 12 -- Fields to Whittier reports a recent meeting with Anna Leonowens, with whom she has discussed Esoteric Buddhism and Madam Blavatsky. Spiritualist Rev. John George Wood joined this conversation, and he and Leonowens exchanged "marvelous tales."

April - May -- Thaxter to Fields. As the death of her husband draws near, Thaxter reaches "after the dead," joining with a good number of her friends and acquaintances.

31 May -- death of Levi Thaxter, husband of Celia Thaxter.

June -- Thaxter's "Betrothed" presents something like a spirit wedding, a visionary union with a spirit being.

9 October -- Fields to Whittier. Fields seems to express belief in the reality of supernatural events.

12 October -- Thaxter reports the conversion to Spiritualism of the artist Ida Bothe, Miss B. Bothe thereafter becomes a sort of assistant medium to Marion Dickinson, through the spring of 1885.

October 1884 - July 1885. See especially Thaxter to Fields of 12 October 1884.

Autumn -- Jewett to Fields. Jewett makes a "spirit spouse" joke about Thaxter's Spiritualism.

December -- Whittier's "The Light that is Felt" teaches that adults should be more like children, seeking guidance from God by prayer to give light in the darkness of moral life.

1 December -- Whittier to Fields. Fields has reported a recent séance. Whittier seems to agree with Fields that this was not a satisfying experience and in expressing regret that Thaxter "is yielding herself so unreservedly to the baffling and unsatisfactory influence."

1885

Composed during this year was Whittier's "Brahmo Somaj," implying that seeking to communicate with the spiritual world is blind groping compared to prayerfully awaiting silently for the hinges of "the golden gate" of heaven to move.

12 January -- Thaxter to Whittier. Thaxter reports a séance of a previous week at the home of Annie Fields, attended by Jewett, Fields and others, saying that all found it convincing and deeply moving.

7 February -- Thaxter to Fields. Thaxter begins reporting by letter to Fields a series of séances attended by her family members and friends.

8 February -- Thaxter to Fields. Another gathering at Fields's is planned.

24 March -- Thaxter to Fields. Fields has visited Mrs. Dickinson on her own. Jewett also continues to attend Thaxter's sittings with Mrs. Dickinson.

3 April -- Thaxter to Fields. Thaxter says that she has written an account of her winter experiences of Spiritualism. Mary Greenwood Lodge has challenged the current medium's authenticity.

16 April -- Whittier to Fields. Fields has written him of some event that has revealed Thaxter's current mediums, Mrs. Dickinson and Ida Bothe, as untrustworthy. He hopes Thaxter will not publish her account of the previous months.

10 June -- Thaxter to Fields. Disappointed that Fields and Jewett no longer trust Mrs. Dickinson, Thaxter introduces another "sensitive," her sister-in-law's nursemaid, Ella Adams.

19 June -- Thaxter to Fields. Thaxter continues to believe in Mrs. Dickinson.

25 June -- Thaxter's "Her Mirror" shows a character longing for the physical touch of a deceased beloved.

2 July -- Thaxter to Fields. Mrs. Dickinson departs Boston. This is the last letter we currently have in which Thaxter seems still to accept as genuine her spiritualist adventures.

Significant Events after 1885

1 June 1886 -- Thaxter writes to Fields about her conversion to Theosophy. She remains friends with Mrs. Dickinson and reports the continuing spiritualist experiences of Ella Adams. While Thaxter continues to believe that the dead deliberately communicate with the living, she no longer accepts that the living should seek by means of mediums or in other ways to communicate with the dead.

In letters to Jewett in late fall, Fields shares Thaxter's interest in the Theosophist teacher, Mohini.

6 November 1886 -- Whittier writes to Fields that he has lost patience with "cranks and pretenders" who "divine for money."

May 1887 -- Jewett publishes "The Courting of Sister Wisby," which mocks the spiritualist notion of "spirit spouses."

29 June 1887 -- Fields feels able to make light of Thaxter's enthusiasms, "whispering" to Whittier the rumor that Mohini, Thaxter's guru, may convert of Catholicism. "What will Celia do!"

11 November 1888 -- Thaxter writes to Whittier about her enthusiasm for Mohini's translation of the *Bhagavad Gita*. She expresses a belief in reincarnation.

1896 -- Jewett publishes *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, which includes accounts of seeming communications between the living and the dead, notably Captain Littlepage's story of travelers to a remote land that may be the border between the two worlds and Captain Tilley's connection with his deceased wife.

Part 4 -- Observations

"Love isn't blind: it's only love that sees."
Sarah Orne Jewett in *Letters of Sarah Orne Jewett*
edited by Annie Fields, 1911.

I leave to others to explore this correspondence for what it may contribute to our understanding of major topics, such as American religious history, literary history and biography. My main purpose in this section is to develop a few observations that have come to me as I have worked with these materials, believing they may prove helpful to those who become interested in using these materials in broader and deeper inquiries.

The Invention of Rose Darrah

Since the publication of Rosamond Thaxter's biography of her grandmother, *Sandpiper: The Life and Letters of Celia Thaxter* (1963), biographers and editors of Thaxter, Whittier, Jewett and Fields all have presented Rose Darrah as the main spirit medium the three women consulted during their nearly 4-year participation in Spiritualism. However, there never was such a person. No record of her has yet been found, outside of Rosamond Thaxter's account, and so it appears there is no documentary evidence of her existence.

Rosamond Thaxter invented "Rose Darrah" by misreading her mother's letters. Her error did not result from simple incompetence, for Thaxter's letters are not easy to interpret, especially given her frequent references to some persons by first names only and sometimes by their initials. A chronological list of the named mediums illustrates the complexity Rosamond Thaxter faced in her construction of these events.

A Chronology of Spiritualist Sittings identified by the officiating medium

Jennie Potter -- Mrs. P.

Consulted in May - July 1882. See especially Thaxter to Fields of 24 May.

Sittings without a Medium

In July - August 1882, Celia Thaxter and Rose Lamb "sit" in the evenings and experience intense sensations of spirit presences. See especially Thaxter to Fields of 23 July.

Mary Philbrick -- Mrs. P.

September 1882. See especially Thaxter to Fields of 12 September.

Thaxter says she was sent to Mrs. Philbrick, because she was superior to someone Thaxter had consulted in "Appleton St." This may have been Jennie Potter, but no evidence of this has yet been found.

Marion Dickinson -- Mrs. D.

April 1883 - July 1885. Mrs. Dickinson becomes a close friend of Celia Thaxter and the main medium she consults during this period. In April of 1885, Dickinson's veracity is challenged by Mary Greenwood Lodge, who apparently persuades both Fields and Jewett that Dickinson is not to be trusted.

Ida Bothe -- Miss B.

October 1884 - July 1885. See especially Thaxter to Fields of 12 October 1884.

It is not clear whether Miss Bothe becomes a professional medium. Thaxter describes Bothe's "conversion" in the 12 October letter, when Bothe finds that she is a medium despite her skepticism. During the next nine months, when Thaxter and Fields have frequent sittings, Bothe and Dickinson often are present. Jewett seems to have been present at a number of these sittings.

Ella Adams

June 1885. See Thaxter to Fields of 10 June 1885.

Adams seems to be a "sensitive," who suddenly begins to have visions despite being supposedly uninterested in "the subject" before her visions begin. Nursemaid in Cedric Laighton's family, she seems drawn into "sitting" in order to shore up the damaged reputation of Mrs. Dickinson.

Rosamund Thaxter -- lacking the resources to research the identities of Thaxter's many friends and correspondents -- seems to have learned little about her grandmother's friendships with Rose Lamb, her brother Horace/Horatio and, especially, Robert Darrah. Rosamond Thaxter misread Thaxter's letters of 1882 to conclude that Mr. Darrah was Rose's brother and that Rose was a medium. When a Mrs. D. appeared in the 1883-85 letters, this confirmed that "Rose Darrah" was the main medium Thaxter consulted after her sessions with Mrs. Philbrick in September 1882. Presumably, Rosamond Thaxter did not see the letters that identified Mrs. D. as Marion Dickinson. "Rose Darrah" is never mentioned by her full name in this collection of letters. Her existence is based entirely upon Rosamond Thaxter's mistaken inferences.

Silences

"this want that hollows all the heart"
Thaxter, 30 October 1881

As I stated in the introduction, there are frustrating gaps in the archive of Spiritualism as experienced by Thaxter, Fields, Jewett and Whittier in 1882-1885. Correspondents respond and refer to letters that are not yet located. A main reason for such gaps is that I probably have not seen everything that is available. Surely there are more relevant letters in archival collections, and over time they will come to light. However, I do not expect to see them because I have come to the end of my efforts to collect the correspondence of Jewett and her circle.

In this collection, there is little of Fields's correspondence apart from her letters to Jewett and a tantalizing selection of her letters to Whittier and Thaxter, and in those she says very little about their adventure into Spiritualism. This is a major silence. One would expect that she wrote to Thaxter and Whittier about sittings she attended. Presumably, she sometimes wrote to Jewett about them, as Jewett was not always present. But the small number of letters I have found contain little detail. Particularly notable is that in writing to Whittier from Europe in 1882, she says nothing about the letters she was receiving from Thaxter, letters that one must believe she found particularly affecting as Thaxter relayed messages she believed she received from the deceased James T. Fields.

Another obvious gap is Thaxter's correspondence with Whittier and, presumably, with other friends about her Spiritualist consultations. Thaxter indicates that she sent accounts of some of her experiences to Whittier, but these have not been located. There must be correspondence about the accusation of fraud that Mary Greenwood Lodge brought against

Marion Dickinson and about Louise Moulton's skepticism. Moulton's opinions could be especially interesting, since she appears to have been a believing Spiritualist. Surely, there are other less obvious missing parts.

While acknowledging these silences is necessary, they do not present much mystery as yet. With good fortune, they will be remedied someday. But there are at least two more significant silences.

Whittier confides to Annie Fields that he worries about Thaxter's enthusiasm for Spiritualism. While he is pleased that she has found a remedy for her deep grief at her mother's death and her religious doubts, he hesitates to endorse her association with mediums and her desire to seek out direct communication. What does he say to Thaxter about this? Though he cautions her at least once, Whittier's letters to Thaxter in this collection seem to avoid discouraging her. After one face-to-face visit during the spring of 1882, Thaxter believed he was wholly supportive. I see Whittier as motivated by deep affection for Thaxter, worried about her, and carefully maintaining their friendship. To know more fully what he wrote to her during this time could clarify the ways in which he was silent with Thaxter.

More intriguing to me is Jewett's apparent silence about two topics, events of the winter of 1884-5 and her view of Thaxter's association with Marion Dickinson, Thaxter's medium during that winter.

Thaxter's letter to Whittier of 12 January 1885 places Jewett at the memorable sitting she reports. Thaxter writes: "we were all sobbing, Annie and Mrs. Lodge and I, and Pinny [Jewett] too was touched to tears." Clearly, this was a momentous event for all of them, and yet I have seen no account of it by Jewett. One might expect that she, too, would have written to Whittier about it, or perhaps to her other main confidant, Mary Rice Jewett. But no such letter has yet emerged. Furthermore, the letters we have show that Jewett probably attended several more sittings in the winter and early spring of 1885. While it is quite possible more accounts exist or have existed, at this time they seem not to.

Twice in the current record, Jewett -- writing to Fields -- makes light of Thaxter's enthusiasm. In November of 1882, she imagines being able to transport herself supernaturally: "It would be a great astonishment to Sandpiper [Thaxter] if I learned how to travel in that way and sometimes 'lighted down 'forninst' her." In the fall of 1884, Jewett suggested that Thaxter might have engaged in one of the more radical practices of some Spiritualists, a spirit marriage: "Does Sandpiper play with you, or has she married a ghost and therefore she cannot come?" Thaxter's letters to Fields are replete with regret about how little time she gets to spend with Fields, whom she considers one of her very closest friends. Jewett was well aware of this, and so there seems to be a pointed irony in her hint that Thaxter now prefers speaking with ghosts to playing with her living friends. Because Jewett rarely put to paper a hostile word about her friends, the spirit marriage remark seems especially harsh, coming within six months after Thaxter's husband died -- 31 May 1884. Jewett says little to clarify her question, making it too easy to "read in." But it becomes especially notable as the final remark we have in Jewett's letters about Spiritualism or Thaxter's sittings.

Jewett also confided to Whittier her skepticism about Spiritualist mediums late in 1883, when they exchanged remarks about Elizabeth Stuart Phelps's 1883 novel, *Beyond the Gates*. That book was the second of her three "spiritualist novels," following *The Gates Ajar* (1868). In *Beyond the Gates*, the narrator, a woman rather like Phelps herself in age and family, has a near death experience in which she dreams that she dies and goes to Heaven. Phelps imagines life after death as much like human life on Earth would have been had there been no fall in Eden. People there seem to live much as they did before Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. They have physical bodies and limited knowledge, requiring that they learn to live in their new state, but the natural state in this world is a unity of the individual will with the divine will. Phelps places those who have failed to understand and accept Christian belief in a sort of lower state, a kind of purgatory, where they may be educated gradually into harmony with divinity. This state of being seems rather like the "waiting place" of Captain Littlepage's story of the North Pole in *The Country of the Pointed Firs*.

Phelps represents this afterlife as consistent with Spiritualist beliefs. The enlightened inhabitants actively care for and watch over those they have left behind. They try to communicate with their loved ones, and they are able to help them find consolation for their losses and to provide spiritual guidance, usually to people who are not consciously aware of their presence. They even are able to effect minor material events, such as changes in air temperature and small movements such as

stirring loose hair. But this vision of Heaven clearly does not support the kinds of mediumship Thaxter, Fields and Jewett were soon to experience, in which major physical manifestations would occur. Nor is there any indication that the spirits of the dead could be called by a medium to communicate more directly with the living.

Jewett reported to Whittier on 24 October 1883,

> I have read Miss Phelps's book and I think most of it is very beautiful and though the sillinesses of it hurt one a little, there's ever so much to be thankful for, and I know it will do good and make vague things real to many people.

It seems likely that Jewett found some of Phelps's speculations about the material organization of the afterlife silly. Whittier said of his own reading of *Beyond the Gates*, "Ah! -- if we only knew! in the place of conjecture and imagination. I believe in the future life -- but the how and where!" Jewett would have drawn upon her own experience to appreciate Phelps's vision of the continuation of intimacy on a spiritual level between the living and their beloved dead. And it seems probable as well that Jewett perceived Phelps's implied critique of mediums calling forth the dead and evoking material manifestations.

Jewett's silence toward Thaxter on the topic of Spiritualism seems deliberate and studied, not -- so far as I can tell -- a result of my not yet having found more relevant letters, but of her choosing to say nothing in writing about the Spiritualist meetings of that winter or about Thaxter's leadership. I am inclined to infer that Jewett was not persuaded of the rightness of the Spiritualist events of 1884-5, though perhaps she merely felt they were too private to discuss in writing, even with her closest friends. Even though she was present at several of the sittings that included Fields, and even though she was moved to tears in January 1885, she chose to say nothing rather than expose or express criticism of any participants after her remark in the fall of 1884 about Thaxter marrying a ghost.

Noticing her silence led me to recognize that Jewett also remained mostly silent about Thaxter's reports of 1882. 24 April of that year was the first anniversary of the death of James T. Fields. This was the first spring of Jewett and Fields's intimate friendship. For the second time during that year, Annie Fields had fallen into a deep depression. She and Jewett planned a trip to Europe together, in the hope that the change of scene, a return for Fields to familiar parts as Jewett's guide on her first trip abroad, would prove healing. Encouraged by Celia Thaxter, in March and April preceding this trip, Fields and Jewett separately consulted a medium at least once. On 24 March, Whittier responds to a report from Fields with a gentle warning that may imply her experience left her somewhat skeptical. He mentions his suspicions of fraud in many cases, but his main point is that he finds it repugnant to make an entertainment of spiritual reality.

By 4 April 1882, Jewett is able to report to Whittier on her own séance. She says that her basic attitude toward the exercise was "suspicious and unbelieving." Still, she was deeply impressed by the medium's apparent personal knowledge of her family, particularly of her father, and she could not help feeling consoled and uplifted. She came away virtually certain that she had not been fooled. But she concludes in full agreement with Whittier's views in his 24 March letter to Fields:

> It was no surprise when the message came from father that he knew me so much better than when we saw each other and that he was always with me, and loved me ten times more than when he went away. And I was given a dear and welcome charge and care over Mrs. Fields which I can speak about better than write to you. I think this has been a great blessing to her, and a great comfort. I do not believe she will go again. I cannot imagine making it a sort of entertainment, and letting it be the gratification of curiosity. No good can come of that. I believe it would take away too much of our freedom of choice which is something to which we cannot cling closely enough. One does not think of seeking these impulses and teachings of the spirits, only of listening to them gladly when they come. But one sails with sealed orders so often, that the help which came to me the other day was most welcome.

This is the last instance we have of Jewett writing about her own encounters with mediums.

While Jewett traveled with Fields in Europe, from May through October, Thaxter wrote several letters to Fields about séances with Jennie Potter in the spring, her summer of enjoying the "presences" with Rose Lamb at Appledore, and then her sittings with Mary Philbrick in the autumn. While multiple letters pass from Thaxter to Fields reporting on these events, Jewett wrote nothing directly either to Whittier or to her sister, Mary, about this. Though this is less certain, it appears as well

that Jewett did not write to Thaxter about this either. Jewett told her mother in a letter of 14 August that she had sent two or three notes to Thaxter and some messages through Fields, who, she says, wrote very often to Thaxter -- these letters have not been found. Jewett's opinion of Thaxter's letters may be inferred from a remark she made to her sister in one of her long letters from Europe:

> They all seem so glad to see Mrs. Fields but it brings up so many old associations. I couldn't help thinking how sad it was for her at the Dickens last night, but nobody would ever know, she is so lovely and thoughtful for other people.

Though a main purpose of this trip was to take Fields out of scenes that continually renew her feelings of loss, visiting old friends in Europe itself renews those feelings. Jewett is pleased that Fields's health is so improved that she can gracefully weather these reminders, but still Jewett senses Fields's inner pain, and it seems likely that she was not pleased with Thaxter's frequent reminders, well-intended as they were.

Fields's 28 June report to Whittier of the June 1882 day she and Jewett spent with Alfred Lord Tennyson on the Isle of Wight reveals a complex response to seeing old friends she shared with her husband. She says the pleasure of seeing and conversing with the Tennysons was "unspeakable." Seeing how tenderly the Tennysons remember her husband compensates in part for her loss and, itself, constitutes a consolation, a kind of assurance of future reunion. That there has been "no real change" in their mutual love sustains and nurtures the hope of reunion. Jewett's sense of the pain of renewing the old friendships seems to be balanced in Fields's telling by the pleasure and consolation of remembering their mutual love.

Jewett's view may have been colored by the letters from Thaxter, which probably *did* renew Fields's pain, though they also tried to offer the consoling assurance of a continuing affection. Fields, however, seems to have nothing to say to Whittier about those letters. Perhaps Jewett's writing on 9 October to the then famous British medium William Eglinton offers a clue about Jewett's view of the effects on Fields of Thaxter's reports. There is too little information in Jewett's letter to infer anything, but still it is notable that Jewett tried to arrange a meeting with Eglinton shortly before she and Fields returned home from Europe.

Thaxter seems unaware that she may be contributing to Fields's pain with her reports of repeated communication with James T. Fields. She had become somewhat like Dr. Boynton in Howells's *The Undiscovered Country*, blinded by her enthusiasm. Thaxter believes it will be comforting for Fields to know that her husband constantly watches over her and that he has delegated Jewett to speak for him. One cannot imagine with any certainty how Fields reacted to Thaxter's mediation, but surely there must have been considerable suffering, however well she managed to find comfort. The following January, though, Fields wrote to Whittier that she believed Jewett had been sent to her by "divine love" and proved the "nearness of the unseen." This belief makes "the days possible and sometimes even beautiful until the end." Thaxter certainly meant well, and she may even have helped persuade Fields that Jewett's friendship was heaven-sent, but Thaxter's enthusiasm may have overruled her sensitivity to Fields's feelings. Jewett -- spending nearly all of every day with Fields and surely reading Thaxter's letters -- must have felt their effects much as Fields did. And she writes not a word to sister Mary or to Whittier about Thaxter's letters or Fields's reactions. And, it appears, she hardly wrote to Thaxter at all.

One question arising from these silences concerns what motivated Jewett and Fields to continue attending séances in spite of their reservations. Jewett's amused distance seems clear when she makes her November 1882 comment about materialization, and there is no evidence that this view changed after that comment. That Jewett joked with Fields about Thaxter's beliefs suggests that Fields also was capable of laughing at Thaxter with Jewett. One wonders whether they and Whittier had been inoculated against the abuses of Spiritualism by reading Howells's 1880 novel. Though I have found no documentary evidence that any of them read *The Undiscovered Country*, it is difficult to imagine that they failed to read a novel by their friend that was serialized in *Atlantic*, which they routinely read through. Granted the strong emotional appeal of receiving convincing, direct communications from their beloved dead, still Fields, Jewett and Whittier, must have remembered that Dr. Boynton's delusions also began with the loss of his wife and that they led him far astray. In the 1880s, they were better able than Thaxter to sail "under sealed orders."

In December of 1882 Whittier warned Fields about the pitfalls of the materialization of the dead during séances, and it appears thereafter,

that Fields also continued to have reservations. But, while Fields almost certainly shared Whittier's and Jewett's doubts about "consulting" the dead, she remained persuaded that Spiritualism offered reliable "light" for unbelievers. She wrote Whittier on 9 October 1884 that she was pleased to find so many taking Spiritualism seriously, echoing language from Thaxter's letters when she said of a Mrs. Goddard: "I'm glad to see some deeper interest awaking for I am sure she will find light in it and no one can need it more.... I can see something dawning in her mind where formerly all has been so dark." In May of 1885, Fields wrote to Jewett about her continuing belief that the dead watch closely over the living when she thinks of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow caring for his grandchild.

Despite her skepticism of mediumship, we have seen that in the winter and spring of 1885, Fields attended a number of séances, apparently organized by Thaxter, some at Fields's home. One may speculate that behind her willingness to countenance sittings is Thaxter, stimulated by her friendship with the two mediums, Dickinson and Bothe, the death of her husband, and her worry about the health of her son, Roland. Fields, like Whittier, remained willing to support her dear friend, and it is not surprising that Jewett joined in this and also attended these sittings.

In the spring of 1885, Jewett and Fields witnessed Thaxter's relationships with Mary Lodge and Louise Moulton undermined by their disagreements regarding Marion Dickinson. Thaxter's letters defending Dickinson show that Fields wanted to heal those wounds, but she was not very successful. Still, Whittier, Jewett and Fields successfully maintained their friendship with Thaxter despite their doubts and worries. After the deceptions of Dickinson became clear, Thaxter's enthusiasm waned, and in the summer of 1885, her reports of sittings ended.

By 1895, when Rose Lamb and Annie Fields put together their affectionate *Letters of Celia Thaxter*, both seem to have concluded that Thaxter was lost and confused as a Spiritualist and really came into her maturity religiously with her conversion to Theosophy. Certainly the letters Thaxter wrote after June 1885 show her having settled into convictions that fit her understanding of her life and her world.

These are not likely to be the last words on this topic. Though I have completed my work of collecting the Jewett correspondence, I have not come across any of the letters that Jewett says she and Fields wrote to Thaxter from Europe in 1882. At some future date, those letters may come to light, and one may expect they would enrich this account.

Spiritualism in Public Writing

> "Dare to speak for us, for the truth you know ... help us to let this light on the world, this happiness, Dare to do it" -- I said, shaken to my very heart, "I dare. I will bring every one, speak to every possible one" -- Thaxter to Fields, 12 September 1882.

In September 1882, the dead admonished Thaxter to "dare to speak & help this truth that should so illuminate the world." One might expect, then, that she and her friends would broadcast their beliefs about Spiritualism during these years when they were so intensely involved. How Spiritualism impacted the careers of Whittier, Thaxter, Fields, and Jewett finally is a larger question than I propose to explore here. Instead, I focus on their output during the 1880s, looking for signs that their views of spiritualism found expression in their publications.

Whittier and Patience

> I will possess my soul in patience for the little time I have to wait here, assured that, if my friends do not manifest themselves to me in this state, I shall soon meet them beyond.
>
> Whittier to Fields -- April 1885

In *John Greenleaf Whittier* (NYU Press 1967), Edward Wagenkecht points out that Whittier was skeptical about supernatural occurrences throughout his life. His own experience led him to oppose "pernicious credulity." But he moderated this position when a number of his friends were drawn into Spiritualism. He then said he could easily believe "that the spirits of the dead are the viewless watchers of the living -- attending and beneficent spirits and retaining the love and sympathy of their humanity." But he remained alive to the fear that Spiritualism exploited the natural desire to see and touch one's lost friends and, thereby, "induced credulity in the inquirer and corruption in the medium." As much as Whittier himself wanted to meet a ghost, he held to the belief that though the dead might sometimes choose to communicate with the living, such a meeting must be initiated not by himself, but by God (pp. 184-5). A consistent theme in his poems that refer to the afterlife during the 1880s is that upon death, we are reunited with our loved ones, and we should

patiently await that day when we again may see, hear and touch them.

Whittier's counsel of patience was consistent with his devout Quaker faith. Professing the priesthood of all believers, he may have belonged to the group of Quakers for whom a worship service typically occurs without clergy, the congregants waiting to be moved by "the Spirit" to speak. In his letter to Fields of 31 October 1884, Whittier speaks of poetic inspiration as akin to spiritual vision in terms that parallel the experience of ghostly visitation:

> Santa Teresa shall not go into the waste-basket. Her experience is that of all of us. The vision comes & in its light we write, and find when it passes that the "words are dead" and only the poor, helpless body is left. Perhaps thee may improve the poem, but it seems to me fine in conception and expression. Who that has ever seen the vision and felt the strength & hope & rapture of its blurred environment and sought to share with others the song it inspired, can fail to enter into deep sympathy with such a lament.

Whittier's response to Fields's unpublished poem suggests that he and Fields both have been thinking about religious vision and poetic inspiration in the context of Spiritualist experience.

Though never a convert to Spiritualism, still Whittier showed sympathy for his friends' interest during the 1880s. His published writing during that decade consists mainly of poems. His small number of prose pieces do not concern Spiritualism. Following is a list of poems from this time that appear to engage the topic. As a religious poet, Whittier frequently refers to death and the afterlife. Not all such poems are listed here, but only those that seem in some way to respond to the Spiritualism of his friends.

"At Last." *Atlantic Monthly* 49 (March 1882), pp. 874-5. *The Complete Poetical Works*, p. 463.

"The Mystic's Christmas." *The Youth's Companion* (21 December 1882). *The Complete Poetical Works*, p. 462.

"What the Traveller Said at Sunset." *The Independent* (17 May 1883). *The Complete Poetical Works*, p. 463.

"Saint Gregory's Guest." First published as "The Supper of St. Gregory." *Harper's New Monthly* 68 (December 1883), pp. 16-8.

"The Light that is Felt." *St. Nicholas* 12 (December 1884), p. 1.

"Hymns of Brahmo Somaj." *The Friends' Intelligencer* 43 (9 October 1886), p. 650. Whittier's *Poetical Works*, p. 506, gives this poem an 1885 composition date.

In several of the poems listed above, Whittier reiterates the longing of the living to reunite with their dead friends and asserts that this longing cannot be satisfied until after death. "At Last" (March 1882) is a seven stanza prayer, spoken by a person near the end of life, asking for God's continued support as he hears "… far voices out of darkness calling / My feet to paths unknown." These far voices apparently say nothing specific, and Whittier says nothing more about them, except that they call. Hearing the calling, the speaker says, is enough to sustain his faith:

> Suffice it if -- my good and ill unreckoned,
> And both forgiven through Thy abounding grace --
> I find myself by hands familiar beckoned
> Unto my fitting place.

He probably wrote "At Last" shortly before Thaxter, Fields and Jewett are known to have sought the services of a medium. Still, at that time Whittier was well aware of the intensity of his friends' longing to reconnect, Thaxter with her mother, Fields with her husband, Jewett with her father. Whatever his full intentions, the poem speaks to their needs, and Fields acknowledged this. In her letter to Whittier of 24 February, Fields says that she and Thaxter have read the poem together: "… about your new poem 'At Last' which when Celia Thaxter came a day or two ago, I re-read with her. 'How dear and near it makes him seem to us,' she said! Those 'hands familiar' beckoning us seem indeed enough -- all we need and all we ask. For the rest we can trust and be at peace."

In his letter to Fields of 10 May 1883, Whittier included a clipping of "What the Traveller Said at Sunset." Just before death, on the border of the two worlds, the speaker confesses his human weakness, his desire to meet his beloved dead as foremost among his hopes for the life to come. He acknowledges this longing, understanding that his desire may need correction by the Divine will, and implying that the desire of the living for communion with the dead must be subject to God's imperfectly known purposes. Both of these poems may be

read as cautionary to friends as they are drawn into Spiritualism.

The other listed poems seem to deal more directly with problems Whittier finds in Spiritualism, though none explicitly critiques the movement. In "Saint Gregory's Guest" (1883), Whittier recounts a legend in which Christ appears to Pope Gregory to acknowledge his gift to a beggar years before. The final stanza emphasizes that the human senses, absent divine intervention, are inadequate to perceiving the one spiritual being who always is present in the world:

> Unheard, because our ears are dull,
> Unseen, because our eyes are dim,
> He walks our earth, The Wonderful,
> And all good deeds are done to Him.

Christ chooses, unsought, to appear to St. Gregory. He is not made materially visible by the rituals of a medium. Nevertheless, Whittier expresses sympathy for those who need manifestations to maintain their faith. In "The Mystic's Christmas" (December 1882) Whittier contrasts a mystic with the "merry monks" celebrating Christmas. The mystic believes those who need material, quasi-pagan signs to celebrate Christ's birth may be saved by their faith, but nevertheless they are blind: "They needs must grope who cannot see." The mystic, however, does not need material evidence to support his faith: "The outward symbols disappear / From him whose inward sight is clear."

In "The Light that is Felt" (1884), writing for a young audience, Whittier may speak directly to Spiritualists as among those who need to become more childlike, asking for parental help to find their way in the dark:

> We older children grope our way
> From dark behind to dark before;
> And only when our hands we lay,
> Dear Lord, in Thine, the night is day,
> And there is darkness nevermore.

"Older children" are merely groping in the dark if they fail to pray for and await guidance. Implicitly, seeking the aid of the dead is a kind of groping. A similar message appears in section 2 of "Hymns of Brahmo Somaj" (1885/6):

> We fast and plead, we weep and pray,
> From morning until even;
> We feel to find the holy way,
> We knock at the gate of heaven!
> And when in silent awe we wait,
> And word and sign forbear,
> The hinges of the golden gate
> Move, soundless, to our prayer!
> Who hears the eternal harmonies
> Can heed no outward word;
> Blind to all else is he who sees
> The vision of the Lord!

One may speculate that in this poem, Whittier responds to Thaxter's poem, "The Betrothed" (1884) in which the speaker recounts the result of awaiting in silence for a momentous arrival, and in which appears the image of the opening of the soundless golden gate.

Whittier may be seen in these poems to offer gentle counsel to his dear living friends. Do not let your deep affection mislead you to succumb to the desire to see, hear and touch your beloved deceased by making use of mediums. Instead, live faithfully toward the death in which a genuine reunion will come, and cultivate a spiritual life that may, if God wills, vouchsafe intimations of that happy future. This is virtually the same advice Almira Todd gives at the end of Jewett's "The Foreigner," to live in this world, but for the other.

Thaxter's Mirror

> We all feel the help we receive from the Divine Spirit. Why deny, then, that some men have it more directly and more visibly than others?
>
> Whittier, quoted by Fields
>
> in *Authors and Friends* (1896).

Thaxter heard through her medium the plea of the dead to tell the world of the great truths revealed by Spiritualist practice: that life after death was a certainty, that we survive death as ourselves, that all losses are repaired after death, and that we can experience healing communion before death. But not all these ideas were acceptable to her market, particularly the notion that we can communicate with the dead at will during mortal life. She published most of her writing in traditionally Christian magazines, and much of her output was for child readers. The following list includes all of Thaxter's poems from 1882-1886 that I believe may arise from her Spiritualism.

"How Far Yet?" *St. Nicholas* 9 (August 1882), pp. 808-9.

"In Autumn." *Zion's Herald* 60 (26 September 1883), p. 310. *The Poems of Celia Thaxter* (1896), pp. 196-7.

"A Song of Hope." *Century* 27 (February 1884), p. 581. *The Poems of Celia Thaxter* (1896), pp. 218-9.

"Betrothed." *The Manhattan* 3 (June 1884), p. 540. *The Poems of Celia Thaxter* (1896), pp. 240-1.

"Her Mirror." *The Independent* 37 (25 June 1885), p. 26. *The Poems of Celia Thaxter* (1896), p. 202. First published in *The Independent* 31 (18 September 1879), p. 1.

"Compensation" *Century* 31 (April 1886), p. 828. *The Poems of Celia Thaxter* (1896), pp. 222-3.

Her poetry for children did not present material that would forward her Spiritualist faith. Still, "How Far Yet?" (1882) expresses one Spiritualist idea important to Thaxter at this time in what may be read as an allegory of a child and her grandmother being reunited after death with their lost family and friends. Because this belief also is common to conventional Christianity, only one's knowledge of Thaxter's spiritual practice in the first half of 1882 would press one to read the poem as arising from her current beliefs. At least five poems for adults from that period cautiously raise Spiritualist themes. All appear in secular magazines, except for those in *The Independent* and *Zion's Herald*,

"In Autumn" (1883) moves in the final three stanzas from considering losses to longing for certainty about an afterlife.

> And as we lose our wistful hold
> On warmth and loveliness and youth,
> And shudder at the dark and cold,
> Our souls cry out for Truth.
> No more mirage, O Heavenly Powers,
> To mock our sight with shows so fair!
> We question of the solemn hours
> That lead us swiftly -- "Where?"
> We hunger for our lost -- in vain!
> We lift our close-clasped hands above,
> And pray God's pity on our pain,
> And trust Eternal Love.

Though Thaxter's contemporary audience probably saw here a conventional longing for certainty about eternity, when she composed this poem, she believed the Spiritualist answer to "Where?" Posing her question may be an indirect way of nudging her readers toward considering a contemporary "proof" of "Eternal Love."

"A Song of Hope" finds in dawn a response to the speaker's desire to see again a lost beloved, a promise that "My love ... shall prevail / Against eternal darkness...." She engages a similar theme in perhaps her last poem to explore a Spiritualist idea, "Compensation" (1886) What, her speaker asks, in the next life could compensate for losing the beauties of spring? The one hope that exceeds the joy of returning spring is "The hope of finding every vanished soul / We love and long for daily...." In these poems, Thaxter remains within conventional Christian doctrine, but emphasizes the importance of personal survival after death and the renewal of relationships established in life.

Thaxter returns to the theme of longing for a lost beloved in "Her Mirror" (1879/1885). It is a little hard to decide exactly how to approach this poem, as it was first published before Thaxter took up Spiritualism. Assuming that it was her choice to re-submit the poem, it seems reasonable to reconsider it in the context of 1885. The speaker looks into a mirror, seeking there the image of a deceased friend:

> Blindly for her dear hand I grope;
> There's nothing life can have in store
> So sweet to me as this sweet hope,
> To feel her smile on me once more!

While contemporaries likely interpreted this as an artful but still conventional lament, reading in the context of Thaxter's reports of sittings draws the reader toward understanding the poem as Thaxter in her own voice longing for the kind of quasi-physical intimacy with her mother she experienced in the winter of 1884-5.

Thaxter's most fully realized Spiritualist poem probably is "Betrothed" (1884). The speaker is alone on a stormy winter night, awaiting an arrival, "Listening with patience breathless and intense":

> 'T is my heart hears, at last, the silent door
> Swing on its hinges, there's no need the fire
> Should show me whose step thrills the conscious floor,
> As suddenly the wayward flame leaps higher.
> Thou comest, bringing all good things that are!
> Infinite joy, and peace with white wings furled,
> All heaven is here and thou the morning-star,
> Thou splendor of my life! "Thou Day o' the world!"

While the allusion to Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* in the final line may direct readers to see the speaker as a male greeting the arrival of his intended, the rest of the poem seems to

make clear that the arrival is supernatural. In the language of a spirit wedding, an angelic being from beyond the grave arrives, either to offer a temporary reunion or to invite the speaker across the boundary into the next world. While it is possible to read that being as a conventional vision of Christ, Thaxter's language makes that reading difficult to sustain. Thaxter avoids direct advocacy for Spiritualism, but this poem seems clearly to present an analogue to her séance experiences.

Thaxter's readership, often children and conventionally Christian, probably limited her ability to publish openly spiritualist poetry or fiction. There are indications in her letters that she drafted material on her experiences in sittings, but she seems to have published none of this. If she published anything fulfilling her promise to make Spiritualist truths known to the world, this writing has not yet been discovered. In her poetry of the period, one can see ways in which her beliefs of 1882-85 may have seeped into her publications, but explicit advocacy is absent.

Fields and Distance

> The striking feature of today is the wide-spread interest in what we have called the supernatural. I am truly amazed at the new people and the new kinds of mind engaged in solemn consideration of this subject, since men of science have refused to scoff any longer but have joined the ranks of investigators.
>
> Fields to Whittier, 9 October 1884.

Between February 1879 and October 1882, Fields published only two poems. Her collection of poetry, *Under the Olive*, appeared in 1881, but it was virtually completed before the death of James T. Fields on 24 April 1881. Her prose publications in the aftermath of his death included two books, *James T. Fields: Biographical Notes and Personal Sketches* (1881) and *How to Help the Poor* (1883), and several essays related to her social work. By late 1883, she had resumed publishing poetry and literary essays not unlike her work before her husband's death.

Between the death of Mr. Fields and January 1887, when Celia Thaxter's fervor for Spiritualism had passed, Fields published eleven poems. While several gave attention to death and the afterlife, only three from 1883 reflect the influence of her Spiritualist experiences.

Humilty. *Harper's Magazine* 66 (January 1883), p. 233.

Chrysalides. *Atlantic Monthly* 52 (September 1883), pp. 375-6.

The Initiate. *Atlantic Monthly* 52 (December 1883), pp. 745-6.

"Humility" (January 1883) seems to caution against seeking knowledge beyond that normally available to humanity, suggesting that grief and care come from reaching above the mundane:

> Then climb not toward the steps of a throne,
> A canopy must veil the sky;
> From the green field we do not own
> We yet may watch the wild birds fly;
> There shall remain the ancient heaven
> Once unto the child-heart given.

This final stanza implies that a child-like attitude toward the natural world compensates for the veil that obscures the spirit world of the sky from human vision. Fields distances both speaker and reader from her meaning, veiling it in metaphor.

"Chrysalides" (September 1883) contrasts the meanings of death among the ancient Egyptians and Greeks. Preserved in the stasis of "awful cerements," the royal Egyptian dead remain "stirless figures," eternally buried away from the "new earth, where new men come and go." In ancient Greece, however, a dying hero, carried into the sky by an eagle, calls upon upon the raptor:

> “Eat, bird, and feed thyself! This morsel choice
> Shall give thy claws a span;
> This courage of a man
> Shall bid thy pinions swell,
> And by my strength thy wings shall grow an ell."

As a classicist, Fields understood that the eagle was Zeus's bird, sometimes the carrier of his thunderbolts. Presumably, then, she implies that the transmutation of the hero is not merely a recycling of his physical substance, but also an apotheosis, in which the hero is transformed into an immortal, as reflected in the poem's title. The hero becomes a hero by running with ardor, over-taxing his strength in a mundane activity. His ascent into heaven, then, is Zeus's reward for the person who strove worthily with all he had. While it is not certain that Fields was thinking of her husband and responding to the assurances of his immortality that she was receiving at this time, it is not difficult to see the poem in this way.

While "Humility" and "Chrysalides" seem to touch upon the desire for knowledge of an afterlife and the faith that a glorious afterlife awaits the virtuous, "The Initiate" (December 1883) displaces a séance into ancient Greece. In the opening three stanzas, Fields sets the scene near Athens, describing the procession to Eleusis of those appropriately moved to ascend by five days of meditation:

> In the seer's seeing eye,
> The maiden with a faithful soul,
> In youth that did not fear to die,
> Was felt that strange control.
> Yet no voice the dreadful word
> Through these centuries of man
> Made the sacred secret heard,
> Or showed the hidden plan.

The seer, the faithful maiden, and the fearless youth were called, "felt that strange control." Fields's use of "control" seems to invoke directly the Spiritualist concept of a spirit control. But whether they then actually made contact with the dead during the final four days of the nine-day ritual remains unknown.

> All the horrors born of death
> Rose within that nine days' gloom,
> Chasing those forms of mortal breath
> From awful room to room.
> Deep through bowels of the earth
> They drove the seekers of the dark,
> Hearts that longed to know the worth
> Hid in the living spark.
> In that moment of despairs
> Was revealed -- but who may tell
> How the Omnipotent declares
> His truth that all is well?
> Saw they forms of their own lost?
> Heard they voices that have fled?
> We know not, -- or know at most
> Their joy was no more dead.

Fields's speaker imagines the unknown time as a Dantean journey through darkness of those who longed to know whether "the living spark" of mortal life was immortal. What revelation did they attain? The speaker does not know, but says they must have received some assurance that gave them joy. Perhaps they saw or heard their own beloved dead. Her speaker is sure that they experienced some revelation of immortality. In her final stanza, her speaker reflects:

> O shadowed sphere whereon we pause
> To live our dream and suffer, thou
> Shroudst the initiate days; the cause
> Gleams on thy morning brow!

Mortals are initiates, shrouded as if dead, but the dawning sun reveals that human life on the "shadowed sphere" is a dream, from which awakening is inevitable.

The poems Fields published in 1883 seem clearly to reflect how her experiences of Spiritualist contact with her lost husband leaked into her literary effort. However, in these poems, she has distanced herself from the séances she attended. A reader unaware of her concerns and activities at this time would not easily see how the poems grow out of her grief and consolation. It would seem clear, therefore, that while she found in her contacts with the dead material that she wanted to work through in her poems, she did not become the sort of convert who wished to use her poems to attract her readers toward Spiritualism. Though she tends to draw upon her classical interests, her ideas about death and resurrection finally are fairly conventionally Christian, as reflected in the language of her closing stanzas of "The Initiate":

> Light of resurrection gleamed,
> But in what shape we cannot hear;
> Glory shone of the redeemed
> Beyond this world of fear.

Fields seems to have been stimulated, but not necessarily converted by Thaxter's enthusiasm. The distance between her poems and the Spiritualist experiences described in the letters seems to reflect the reservations she shared with Whittier, but also her belief that the dead are not lost, but continue in another world from which they reach out to those they loved while living their dream.

The position she seems to have reached is stated directly in *Memoir of Annie Keary by her Sister* (1882), a biography of British author, Annie Keary (1825-1879) by Eliza Harriett Keary (1827-1918). Fields seems to have read this book in 1883, and she recommended it to Whittier in her letter of 17 December 1883. Annie Keary explored Spiritualism with critical care and concluded that while it offered a useful proof of the reality of spirit and the afterlife, it was not the best "door" to knowledge of the spiritual realm. Spiritualism as she experienced it too easily drew followers into self-deception and victimization by the credulous or unscrupulous.

By the end of June in 1887, Fields had reached a distance and a security that allowed her to chuckle at Thaxter's devotion to the Indian spiritual teacher, Mohini, with whom she was studying Hindu texts. In a letter to Whittier, Fields repeated gossip that Mohini was being

courted by Catholic "fathers," who hoped to convert a man of such spiritual gifts. Fields then exclaimed: "What will Celia do!!"

Jewett and the Spirit Bride

> [The] deacon ... felt sure he was called by the voice of a spirit bride. So he left a good, deservin' wife he had, an' four children, and built him a new house over to the other side of the land he'd had from his father. They didn't take much pains with the buildin', because they expected to be translated before long, and then the spirit brides and them folks was goin' to appear and divide up the airth amongst 'em, and the world's folks and onbelievers was goin' to serve 'em or be sent to torments. They had meetins about in the school-houses, an' all sorts o' goins on; some on 'em went crazy, but the deacon held on to what wits he had, an' by an' by the spirit bride didn't turn out to be much of a housekeeper, an' he had always been used to good livin', so he sneaked home ag'in.
>
> Sarah Orne Jewett, "The Courting of Sister Wisby" (May 1887).

As I show in my essay, "Living for the Other World: Sarah Orne Jewett as a Religious Writer," Jewett, like many of her Protestant Christian friends, accepted the core beliefs of Spiritualism. From her earliest to her latest published works, she presents characters and incidents that confirm the beliefs that individual identities survive after death, that they continue their relationships with their living beloved, watching over them with care and communicating with them by mysterious means. Jewett describes such an experience of feeling her deceased father's presence during an amusing sermon in her letter of 4 April 1882. Though Jewett accepts Spiritualism's core beliefs, she is very skeptical of its practices, especially the efforts of mediums to question the dead and the flummery of their techniques for making contact and obtaining messages, methods that seem to require the materialization of spiritual beings. I, for one, long to know what Jewett thought of Thaxter's reports of her summer 1882 sittings with Rose Lamb. Thaxter is at that time virtually addicted to the thrill of intimacy with dead souls. It is hard to imagine that Jewett was not dismayed.

The influence of dead people upon living persons often appears in Jewett's published writing. The following list is not comprehensive, but it gives an idea of frequency and chronological extent.

Captain Sand in *Deephaven* (1878)

"A Sorrowful Guest" (1879)

"An Autumn Holiday" (1880)

Chapters 14-15 of *A Marsh Island* (1883)

Nan Prince in chapter 12 of *A Country Doctor* (1884)

"The Courting of Sister Wisby" (1887)

"The Landscape Chamber" (1888)

"Miss Tempy's Watchers" (1888)

The Captain Littlepage and Captain Tilley episodes in *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896)

"The Foreigner" (1900)

These stories and episodes divide roughly into those that present delusional characters, suffering from mental illness, and those where influences and apparitions seem genuine, as in "The Foreigner," when Almira Todd and Mrs. Tolland see Tolland's mother awaiting her at death's door. In the more believable instances, the dead come unbidden to aid the living in a time of need, and the acceptance of these visions is based upon the bond of love between the living and the dead. In "A Sorrowful Guest," Whiston's descent into madness begins with his attending séances. In "The Courting of Sister Wisby," Jewett's story-teller, Mrs. Goodsoe, provides humorous commentary on Spiritualist ideas. The ridiculous Deacon Brimblecorn first goes astray when he claims to be a medium and then leaves his family to take up with a "spirit bride" -- like the spirit husband Jewett fears Thaxter has married in 1884 --, the spirit of a dead woman who wished to marry and watch over him. Other believers in his doctrine "went crazy," but Brimblecorn "held on to what wits he had," and when his spirit bride proved a poor housekeeper, he returned to his family. Letters between Jewett and Whittier of 6 April and 16 August, 1885, suggest that the idea for this story may have come from Whittier, and that they were talking about this material following the winter of Thaxter's deepest involvement with Spiritualism. Presumably, they also conversed about Thaxter.

Jewett's only published reference I have found to the direct influence of the dead upon the living from 1882-85 is the suggestion in Chapter 12 of *A Country Doctor* that Nan Prince's long-dead mother guides her toward her

decision to become a doctor. The decision resolves a crisis of discontent for the young protagonist, in which she is drawn to a nearby riverside,

> … unconscious that she had been following her mother's footsteps, or that fate had again brought her here for a great decision. Years before, the miserable, suffering woman, who had wearily come to this place to end their lives, had turned away that the child might make her own choice between the good and evil things of life.

Jewett suggests that Nan's mother has drawn her again to this location to aid in making a crucial choice. While this passage affirms a belief all four writers shared, it only hints that Nan's mother helps her from beyond and emphasizes that Nan was not consciously aware of such an influence.

Though the significance of this list of stories and episodes may not be great, it is at least provocative to notice that Jewett seems to have published nothing between 1880 and 1887 that comments directly upon Spiritualism. We cannot easily know that this was a deliberate choice, but it also is provocative that her first story after 1880 to deal with Spiritualism included a send-up of a dubious medium's marriage to a spirit bride. Jewett may have restrained herself from criticizing Spiritualism openly while her friends were taking it seriously. Soon after that oppressive weather had passed, with aid from Whittier, she published a healthy breath of fresh air, making fun of a foolish medium.

Conclusion

Fields, Jewett, and Thaxter seem to have arrived solidly at Whittier's position after Spring 1885. They grew skeptical of the materialist developments in Spiritualism and rejected the impiety of invoking the dead. But they held to belief in the two contiguous worlds, across the border of which their affections yearned and their beloved dead reached toward them with comfort and guidance. In "Consciousness and Communication in Jewett's *The Country of the Pointed Firs*." *Consciousness, Literature and the Arts* 3.2 (Aug. 2002), Annemarie Hamlin argues that one may detect aspects of spiritualist practice in Jewett's novel, particularly instances of empathic non-verbal communication. Given the materials developed in this paper, Hamlin's argument seems rather limited in scope, but she surely is right that Spiritualism was "in the air" in 19th-century America. In Jewett's publications, Spiritualist ideas -- the sublime and the ridiculous -- recurred throughout her literary career.

A *Deephaven* Collaboration:

Sarah Orne Jewett, Emma Lewis Coleman, Charlotte Alice Baker, Susan Minot Lane.

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We used to ask for a drink of water; this was our unfailing introduction, and afterward there were many interesting subjects which one could introduce, and we could always give the latest news at the shore.

Houghton Library - https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$53i

Introduction

During the 1880s, four prominent New England women participated to varying degrees in a project to create photographic illustrations for Sarah Orne Jewett's first book, *Deephaven* (1877). In addition to Jewett, the collaborators were:

Emma Lewis Coleman (1853-1942), historian and photographer;
Charlotte Alice Baker (1833-1909), historian and educator;
Susan Minot Lane (1832-1893), painter and educator.

Paula Blanchard includes in *Sarah Orne Jewett: Her World and Her Work* (1994) a paragraph that suggests this must have been an important event in the lives of these four women, a multi-year association that eventuated in 45 photographs. In practical terms of time, labor, and cooperation, this was a complex process that would seem to have loomed rather large in their collective lives.

I began developing this paper when working with a previously unpublished letter Jewett wrote to Baker in 1877, responding to Baker's praise of *Deephaven*. As I explored the implications of that letter, I reviewed Jewett's correspondence and other brief accounts of the collaboration, and I quickly realized that current understanding of these women's project was problematic, mainly because most accounts agreed on an erroneous report that an illustrated edition of *Deephaven* with Coleman's photos was published in 1893. I found that Jewett's bibliographers Clara Carter Weber and Carl J. Weber and WorldCat provide no evidence that such a volume exists. Critics J. Samaine Lockwood and Adam Sonstegard had published materials that took note of and puzzled over Blanchard's claim about an edition illustrated by Coleman. In e-mail exchanges, Sonstegard helpfully made me aware of the existence of the one known extra-illustrated copy of *Deephaven* with Coleman's photos. Friend and colleague, Melissa Homestead, kindly remedied my ignorance about the technical meaning of the term "extra-illustrated," which refers to a unique copy of a book to which illustrations have been added. Folgerpedia says: "Typically, the additions are mounted on additional leaves, and the book is rebound to accommodate its increased thickness."

Since Lockwood and Sonstegard's work, there have been two major developments. Copies of the set of Coleman's photos made for *Deephaven* and held by the Houghton Library at Harvard University have been made available to the public on-line. Lockwood writes about several of these in *Archives of Desire* (2015). The extra-illustrated copy noted by Sonstegard has been donated to the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania, which graciously provided me photographs of the illustrated pages. This rich body of materials has made it possible to develop a fuller and richer account than was available to Blanchard, but as will be seen, many questions about the collaboration remain unanswered.

In this document I present all I have been able to obtain of the primary sources, with information and commentary that may be helpful to scholars who find themselves wishing to carry this work further as part of their projects.

Here I wish to call special attention to the many people who have helped me, in addition to those already named. Completing this report in the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic would have been impossible without a number of kind and generous people who have taken the time to find and share with me materials I could have accessed in no other way. All are named in the acknowledgments near the end of this report. Even with this indispensable aid, there remain materials I cannot currently access, and almost certainly, there is primary material I have not yet located

The Collaborators

Charlotte Alice Baker (11 April 1833 - 22 May 1909)
From Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Library: Guide to the Papers of Charlotte Alice Baker.

Born in 1833 in Springfield, Mass., C. Alice Baker (as she preferred), worked as a teacher, historian, and writer until her death in Boston in 1909. Her mother's family had ties to Deerfield, and after her father's death, Miss Baker began to spend time in Deerfield. In the early 1840s she attended Deerfield Academy, but also attended private schools in Greenfield and Charlestown, Mass. In 1851 she traveled to Illinois where she taught school, returning to teach at Deerfield Academy in 1853. She again went west, and with her life companion, Susan Minot Lane, opened a school in Chicago in 1856. The women ran their school until 1864 when they moved to Cambridge, Mass., to be with Miss Baker's sickly mother. Another school was opened in Boston which operated into the 1890s. (See also: Wikipedia and Find a Grave).

Emma Lewis Coleman (25 August 1853 - 20 February 1942)
From Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Library: Guide to the Papers of Emma Lewis Coleman.

Born in Boston in 1853, Emma Lewis Coleman was an author, photographer, teacher, and craftswoman who spent part of her life in Deerfield, Mass. As the daughter of Lewis Coleman (a well-to-do merchant) and Elizabeth Farrington Coleman, Emma Coleman traveled somewhat extensively in Europe in her youth and received part of her education in Paris. In the 1870s, Coleman taught at a school in Brookline, Mass., where her friendship with Charlotte Alice Baker (1833-1909) and Susan Minot Lane (1832-1893) took root. Baker, a teacher and historian, and Lane, a teacher and painter, had met previously at Deerfield Academy. The three women traveled to the Azores and Madeira in 1879.... Coleman, Baker, and Lane began dividing their time between three locations: Cambridge, Mass., Cutts Island, Kittery, Maine, and Deerfield where Baker had purchased the Frary House, her ancestral home. Coleman became very involved in the restoration of the house (1890-1892) and began to share Baker's antiquarian interests.

Coleman accompanied C. Alice Baker on trips to Quebec to research Baker's *True Stories of New England Captives Carried to Canad*a (Cambridge, 1897), illustrated by Coleman's photographs. She also illustrated Sarah Orne Jewett's *Deephaven* (Boston, 1877) and George Dow's *Everyday Life in the Massachusetts Bay Colony* (Boston, 1935) among other works. Coleman's first book, *Historic and Present Day Guide to Old Deerfield*, published in 1907 with several later editions, also featured her own photographs. In Deerfield, Coleman continued the work begun by C. Alice Baker, and in 1924 published *Epitaphs in the Old Burying-ground at Deerfield, Mass*. Her most ambitious and significant work, *New England Captives Carried to Canada* (Portland, ME, 1925), also expanded C. Alice Baker's research. As part of the local arts and crafts movement, Coleman reintroduced palm leaf basketry in 1899 and was instrumental in establishing the Deerfield Basket Makers. Emma Lewis Coleman died in Boston in Feb. 1942. (See also Find a Grave.)

On-line photos of Coleman appear here:

http://americancenturies.mass.edu/collection/itempage.jsp?itemid=1673

https://artscrafts-deerfield.org/artsapp/pop/person.do_shortName=coleman.html

Sarah Orne Jewett (3 September 1849 - 24 June 1909)

Jewett grew up in South Berwick, York County, Maine, where she lived much of her life. After establishing herself as a short story writer for adults and young people and authoring a well-received novel, *Deephaven* (1877), she formed a close friendship with Annie Fields, wife of the publisher James T. Fields. After Mr. Fields' death in 1881, Jewett and Annie Fields lived and traveled together for the rest of Jewett's life. With Mrs. Fields, Jewett formed friendships with a number of the major artists and intellectuals of her time, including Madame Thérèse Blanc, Willa Cather, Mary Ellen Chase, William Dean Howells, Henry James, Alice G. Howe, Rudyard Kipling, Rose Lamb, Alice Meynell, Harriet P. Spofford, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Celia Thaxter, Mrs. Humphrey Ward, Sarah Wyman Whitman, and John Greenleaf Whittier. Jewett's best known works are "A White Heron," a short story, and *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, a novella.
(See also: Wikipedia and Find a Grave)

Susan Minot Lane (3 August 1832 - 3 February 1893)

From Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Library: Guide to the Lane Family Papers.

Susan Minot Lane, daughter of Martin and Lucretia Swan Lane, born 1832, died 1893. She came to Deerfield in 1854 to become preceptress at Deerfield Academy where she met C. Alice Baker, a teacher. They formed a life-long friendship and opened a series of schools, first in Chicago and later in the Boston area. They befriended Emma Lewis Coleman, noted photographer and author, with whom they traveled to the Azores and Madeira. The extra-illustrated edition of Miss Baker's book, *A Summer in The Azores*, included photographs by Susan. Miss Lane was a pupil of her cousin, artist William Morris Hunt. She worked as an illustrator and artist, frequently painting houses in Boston's north end where she had a studio.

From Martha J. Hoppin, "Women Artists in Boston," n. pp. 43-4.
Susan Minot Lane (1832-1893) lived a quiet life in Cambridge. For many years she taught a "school for young misses" and at the time of her death was an instructor at a private school organized by Mrs. Barthold Schlesinger of Brookline (H.M.K., Boston *Evening Transcript*, February 6, 1893). Whether Lane offered drawing and painting lessons at these schools is unclear. She apparently continued to paint during these years probably in the studio of Helen Knowlton.... According to Knowlton, ... Lane was a distant relative of William Morris Hunt and "also one of his most promising pupils. Many a time he exclaimed with enthusiasm, 'Miss Lane is a painter!' " Despite these auspicious beginnings, she exhibited rarely and little of her work is known. She appears to have painted primarily genre scenes, and in 1881-1882 she executed a series of small oil paintings depicting old architecture of Boston. These were reproduced in photographs and compiled in *Old Boston Houses. Seven Photographs from Sketches in Oil Painted by Susan Minot Lane 1881-1882*, manuscript, Boston Public Library. The original paintings are owned by the Bostonian Society and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Massachusetts Deaths lists her cause of death as pneumonia.

"Massachusetts Deaths, 1841-1915, 1921-1924," database with images, FamilySearch (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:NWHB-QP1 : 2 March 2021), Susan M. Lane, 03 Feb 1893; citing Cambridge, Massachusetts, v 437 p 108, State Archives, Boston; FHL microfilm 961,510. (See also Find a Grave)

What We Thought We Knew

Accounts of the Collaboration before 2022

In *Sarah Orne Jewett: Her World and Her Work* (1994), Paula Blanchard provides a brief report of the *Deephaven* illustration project. She notes that Jewett and her friends made a series of photos in the spirit of French painter Jean-François Millet (1814-1875). Blanchard writes:

> In 1883-86 Jewett and the others collaborated in staging a series of photographs in the Millet style: local models, or sometimes Miss Baker, would dress up in period costume and Coleman would photograph them at everyday rural tasks. Reconstructing historic conditions as accurately as possible the group also followed Millet in creating images intended to express the beauty and dignity of rural life. The results were obviously staged and entirely lacked the heroic aura of Millet's peasants, but Jewett was pleased with them. A few years later she persuaded Houghton Mifflin to use the photographs as illustrations in an 1893 edition of *Deephaven*. (225-6).

The materials collected below will confirm only this much of Blanchard's account: during the 1880s, Jewett, Baker and Coleman collaborated to make a set of photos intended to illustrate *Deephaven*. Whether Baker is a model in any of these photos is difficult to determine, but one person in one of the photos looks much like her. Everything else in this account lacks documentary verification. As noted above, there is no 1893 edition illustrated by Coleman. Further, there is little or no evidence that Lane was involved in making the photos, that the collaboration in making them extended over more than one summer, that historical conditions were reconstructed with models in period costume, and that everyday rural tasks are depicted. While the influence of Millet upon Coleman's work seems well-established, one may be skeptical that this was of particular importance in making the *Deephaven* photos, most of which are of buildings and landscapes without figures.

Though I have failed to find documentary verification for most of Blanchard's account, this does not mean that she was simply making things up. In fact, she worked as any good

biographer would, from other secondary sources that should have been reliable. Further, while some of her facts clearly are erroneous, some of those that lack verification may yet prove to be true. I have attempted to locate the origins of her story by tracing her sources. This search quickly reached a dead end in 1990, just a few years before her book.

In her notes, Blanchard acknowledges "the editors and contributors of the exhibition catalog '*A Noble and Dignified Stream*'" for her information about Jewett and the colonial revival movement in New England. Blanchard learned of the collaboration from Jessie Ravage's, "Sarah Orne Jewett (1849-1909): *Deephaven* (1877)," and from Amy Wilkinson Hufnagel's article on Emma Coleman, both in *Noble Stream*.

Ravage says: "Of the numerous editions of *Deephaven* published through the turn of the century, at least two were illustrated with scenes of the Yorks, South Berwick, and Portsmouth. James R. Osgood and Company published one with forty photographs taken by Emma Coleman ... Houghton Mifflin produced an 1893 edition with drawings by Boston artists Charles and Marcia Oaks Woodbury" (180). With her article is a photo, "Sewall's Bridge, York River" (ca. 1883-4). The legend for this photo says that it was published in an 1885 edition of *Deephaven*, suggesting that the author was able to look at an actual copy. However, in the Houghton Library set (H31),* and in the 1907 extra-illustrated copy only the right portion of the original image appears. This changes the orientation from landscape to portrait, thus allowing it to fit easily as a whole on a page in the book. It seems unlikely, then, that Ravage saw this photo in the known 1907 extra-illustrated copy, because she takes no note of its having been trimmed to fit.

Hufnagel persuasively traces the influence of Millet on Coleman's photography through her study in France and, especially, through the painting of Lane, who studied with William Morris Hunt, who received training from Millet (152-3). She then presents her account of the collaboration. She says that James R. Osgood & Company published an 1893 limited edition of *Deephaven* that included photographs taken by Emma Lewis Coleman: "This edition was the product of the collaboration of Jewett the writer, painter Susan Minot Lane, historian C. Alice Baker, and photographer Coleman. Between 1883 and 1886 and under Jewett's personal direction, Coleman staged reenactments of colonial crafts and work using Lane and Baker and other 'kindly farmers and fisherfolk' of York Maine, as subjects; all were dressed in colonial costume" (152). Hufnagel also points to a staged aspect of some of Coleman's photos, with a composition "theatrical rather than realistic."

Blanchard clearly drew heavily upon Hufnagel's account. In 1992, Hufnagel was persuaded that her narrative of the collaboration was accurate, but she provided no supporting sources. Heather Harrington of Historic Deerfield shared an interesting 1990 memo indicating there was earlier material that may have informed Hufnagel. In a memo from Don Friary addressed to interested Historic Deerfield staff and dated 4 May 1990 appears this passage:

> What was more interesting at the Old State House was an exhibit on the North End. Included were two paintings, oil on canvas, of historic buildings in the North End by Susan Minot Lane. Miss Lane was Miss C. Alice Baker's companion for many years. It is interesting that she was painting these historic buildings around the same time that C. Alice Baker was giving lectures to raise money for the preservation of the Old South Meeting House and when Emma Lewis Coleman was photographing historic houses in Deerfield and elsewhere and also posing Miss Baker and Miss Lane in period costume and attitude to illustrate Sarah Orne Jewett's Deephaven. Miss Lane was clearly a participant in the Antiquarian Movement with her friends.

In 1990, then, it appears that Friary was persuaded that Coleman posed Baker and Lane in "period costume and attitude" to illustrate *Deephaven*.

At this point, the search for the origins of Blanchard's story of the collaboration ends for me as I write at the end of the 2021 plague year. Don Friary's 1990 memo shows that reasonably informed people at that time believed most of the story that came to Blanchard. There must, therefore, be some authoritative earlier source or sources to which he and others had access, and those sources may have drawn upon primary materials I have not discovered. In the bibliography at the end of this paper is a list of secondary sources that I have not been able to access. Perhaps one or more of these can help to clarify this mystery.

———

*I have given numbers beginning with "H" to the photographs in the Houghton Library collection of *Deephaven* photos. I use these numbers throughout the report. They are based upon the

sequence numbers in the Houghton collection. The key to these numbers is "The Houghton Photo Collection 2," below.

Textual Documents of the Collaboration

As of this writing, I have found only a few documents providing textual evidence of this collaboration. These documents are placed in the order of the time they represent rather than in the order of their making.

Jennie Sheldon recounts the beginning of the Baker-Lane relationship

From: Sheldon, Jennie Maria Arms. *C. Alice Baker: Paper read at the Field Meeting of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, held in Deerfield, September 8, 1909*. Pamphlet reprinted from the *Greenfield Recorde*r, Deerfield, MA, 1910, p. 6.

In 1853, a new teacher appeared at the [Deerfield] Academy. "A young lady from Cambridge" was the word passed round. In the course of time there came a day, when the Cambridge lady, Susan Minot Lane, calm, self-poised, strong, with a keen but quiet and kindly wit, met Charlotte Alice Baker, all on fire with generous impulses, warm sympathies and ardent longings. The two came together, and it was not long before the union was complete, as each chose the other for a life companion.

Note

Jennie Maria Arms Sheldon (1852-1938) was a scientist, educator and author, associated with the Woman's Laboratory at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Memorial Hall Museum in Deerfield, MA. Notable in this tribute is that Emma Coleman never is mentioned in the full document.

Sarah Orne Jewett to Charlotte Alice Baker

South Berwick

28 Sept. 1877

Dear Miss Baker

I am going to write you this morning, for two reasons -- first because I feel like it -- and also because I am afraid I should not have a good chance later, as I am going to be away next week -- Thank you so much for your letter which came last night and I wish I could answer it in a talk instead of having to write -- It has made me care a great deal more for you and I do truly hope I shall not make you sorry that you care for me -- But I believe in taking ones friends for better and for worse, as people promise when they marry, and I am too glad to have your friendship and Miss Lane's* to try to persuade you out of liking me by telling over all the reasons why you might not! I think you are quite likely to find them out for yourselves! and all I have to say is that I want to be good and I mean to be good -- and I am in more of a hurry about it, than anybody else -- sometimes! ----- but isn't it easy to forget? I like so much all you said about my writing and you do not know how much I shall thank you if you will always talk to me in just that way -- Indeed I think I am more likely to write too little than too much if I go on feeling as I do now about it -- And it seems often now as if the power of writing managed me instead of my controlling it -- Isnt that the difference between the Orchards Grandmother* and some of the work I have done later? I have been thinking about it a good deal since I read your letter. I get so possessed by my stories and wake up after a while and wonder about them, and how they came, as if they were dreams -- but for all that I work more slowly than I used and more heartily -- As for that little story you read; it isn't like any of my other stories -- that I wrote then -- seven years ago -- It is a funny contrast to them in some ways. Mother never liked it -- but I do -- with all its faults and it is for the 'associations' I have with it more than anything ----- It was not half so boyish as my stories usually were -- I think you will know what I mean by 'boyish.' And not for knowing what one can do, and being conceited, somehow all that is very vague to me and when I try to think about myself it is like facing a high wall, where I had started for a walk! I wonder if you will not laugh when I tell you that it used to seem once in a while as if I had not had half my rightful share of pleasure out of little Deephaven* because I faced much difficulty in 'realizing' it -- I always laugh a little when I use that word! My grandmother died when I was five years old and

I remember clearly the solemn parade of the funeral and a great congregation of old ladies in black. (I dare say there were not so very many.) and one of these old ladies bent over me after the procession came back. I remember I was standing in front of the fender and just how tall the andirons looked there ---- 'Aren't you sorry poor grandma is dead? Dont you miss her?' I suppose I didn't seem sympathetic -- "Poor child. She doesn't realize it" -- and for weeks after this I used to wonder and wonder when I should 'realize' it and what it would feel like -- I think I have often felt so since then about one thing or another. But the older I grow the less I believe in getting puzzled and miserable about myself and the more I believe in doing my work lovingly and heartily -- whatever it is. And as for conceit -- if that means being satisfied with oneself, God knows I am not that! though I might make some confessions to you 'under this head' -- if I hadn't said I should not at the beginning of this letter -- And here comes in one favorite quotation -- "Though" ---

-- Isn't it provoking to be a housekeeper when a fellow wants to write a letter! I wish I could have had you and Miss Lane for my guests while I have been captain of this craft this week! Father and Mother have been up at the mountains and my sister Mary* is in Boston or Newton, or somewhere in that region -- I never realized the [labors *or* effort *?*] of maintaining a family before, for I never kept house more than a day or two at a time -- One of our girls is away too, and I have found treasures of knowledge in my dear head that I never knew about before -- If you please, I think we have lived a little finer than usual! and they needn't poke fun at me for being 'feckless' anymore --

I am in a great fidget about my horse for it hasn't come yet and that man in Boston was ____ enough to send me a long story about a white horse that had been driven by a lady and would stop for you to put on the wheel of the carryall and weighted 850 and was a "perfect coset" -- And all this when I neither want a white horse or a driving horse -- or any of your meek little creatures. I know just what kind of a gait it would have -- a feeble little trot! I don't like a trot but a good swing of a "lope" -- However I have heard of some gallant steeds at North Conway -- and let us hope!

-- I hope next week will be very pleasant to you -- and that there will be no snarls and worries. I think as you say that it grows more and more solemn to begin ones work -- but I do not think you ought to be afraid -- you and Miss Lane -- God bless you both you dear friends of mine! ----

I have found out something about the pewter -- It belonged to the first Church in Lebanon, but it is only sixty years old. Though sixty years is a long while after all -- and we will not be disappointed, will we? ---- I also have polished mine though I dare say yours is shinier -- and I am very fond of it -- It makes me think of you two people always and I'm so glad yours makes you think of me -- It is so beautiful that you said about it in your letter. I had thought all those things -- or part of them -- and so do not the old cups still have a use. I am glad they fell into our hands are not you? ----- Good bye. good bye! --- but I cant help thinking of the unwritten histories in which those old cups played such a part -- I care so much more for country-life every year -- have not I told you so -- for the very limitedness and the way womens lives have been shut in -- so housed; and there has been such a dullness and such bright flickers of sunshine and such unflinching patience, and I love it all more and more. I wish I could have a talk with you -- you would like the fire in the fireplace this gray day -- and it would blaze up gallantly when I threw this letter in and walked up for the two kisses apiece -- good-bye again and God bless you always

Sarah O. J.

Notes

Miss Lane's: Susan Minot Lane (1832-1893).

Orchards Grandmother: Jewett's "The Orchard's Grandmother" first appeared in *Merry's Museum* (59:88-89), February 1871.

Deephaven: Jewett's first novel, *Deephaven* (1877).

Mary: Mary Rice Jewett (1847-1930), Sarah Orne Jewett's older sister.

The manuscript of this letter is held by the Princeton University Library, Princeton, NJ: Robert H. Taylor Collection of English and American Literature RTC01, Box 10, Folder 12. Transcription and notes by Terry Heller, Coe College.

With this manuscript is a damaged envelope addressed to Miss C. A. Baker, 5 Charles St. Boston, cancelled on 28 September in South Berwick. On the back, vertically up the left edge are penciled notes reading: "xx pewter writing L. P."

Comments

I notice two things especially about this letter, that the Jewett-Baker acquaintance seems to have been well-established by 1877, and the importance of *Deephaven* to the deepening of Jewett's relationship with Baker and Lane

It seems clear that Jewett's acquaintance with the couple before this letter was fairly extensive. Signs include their being acquainted with each others' families and their having recently bought items from the same set of used pewter.

The publication of *Deephaven* seems to have revealed a Jewett whom Baker wishes to know better, and her letter must explicitly offer a new intimacy, one that Jewett describes as like marriage, "for better or worse." The 28-year-old Jewett expresses both pleasure and anxiety about beginning this new level of friendship with both Baker (age 44) and Lane (age 45). She cannot help wondering whether she is up to it, but she welcomes the overture, and she imagines that at their next meeting, it will lead to two pairs of kisses.

Baker seems to have been very warm in her praise and appreciation of Jewett's work. Behind this warmth likely was their mutual appreciation of the landscape and history of coastal New England and a recognition that the intimate friendship, now easily readable as same-sex love, between Helen and Kate in the novel, parallels the relationship between Baker and Lane, that in 1877 had persisted for 24 years. The importance to Jewett of Baker's opinion is reflected in the length of the letter. Jewett rarely wrote letters longer than 4 pages; this one triples that length. More important, though, Baker's letter stimulated Jewett to confide in a way that stretched her thinking. Jewett felt the need to articulate how she composed and why she aspired to continue a career as a professional writer. Jewett wrote to Baker about her work in a way somewhat similar to the way she was writing, at the same time, to another close confidant, Theophilus Parsons (1797-1882).

This letter may point to the originating moment in the lives of these three women of the later collaboration on photographic illustration of *Deephaven*. One more needed event would be the entrance of the photographer Emma Coleman into this group of friends. Though Jewett does not mention her in this letter, Coleman's relationship with Baker and Lane was well established by 1877.

From the perspective of 6 or 7 years later, another beginning may be discerned here as well. In her novel, Jewett imagined a same-sex friendship that led to important emotional, intellectual and spiritual growth for two young women near the age of Jewett as she was composing their story. Kate Lancaster and Helen Denis are 24 years old, unmarried, and with no visible interest in heterosexual relationships. At the end of their summer in rural New England, these young women are ready to embark upon useful, independent lives. In passages such as the final paragraph of "The Captains," the narrator, Helen, reveals that after some years since their summer in Deephaven, the two women apparently live together. Jewett also aspired to a useful and independent life, but in 1877, she was without a partner. She had shown no serious interest in heterosexual marriage, and her closest friends were marrying or presumably were unsuitable for the sort of personal and professional partnership Jewett could observe in Baker and Lane. However, by 1880, Jewett and Annie Adams Fields had met, and in 1881, Fields's husband, James T. Fields died. In 1882, Jewett and Fields initiated their Boston marriage with a months-long trip to Europe. As is well-documented, their relationship, like the Baker and Lane relationship, was characterized by deep affection, mutual care, shared travel and adventure, and professional assistance and cooperation. It would seem clear that a significant part of the experience Jewett brought into this relationship was her knowledge of Baker and Lane.

Sarah Orne Jewett to Emma Lewis Coleman

28th December 1886
148. Charles Street.*
Boston.

My dear Miss Coleman

I hardly know how to thank you for the pleasure these photographs give me. I look and look again at the harbour-road with the Harmon Elms,* and feel as if I were taken back to the York of many summers ago. Even before I knew Miss Lane and Miss Baker, long years ago when there was nothing in the world to do but drive about with my father I remember going to the Donnell house* and seeing the master and mistress of it and being regaled with a sight of their big gay glass mugs and chinaware by way

[of *?*] treat -- It was even longer ago than the kittenhood of their far-famed big cat!

The other pictures are truly a bit of York summer here in this wintry town. I think you were most kind to give them to me. Sometime I wish very much to see the rest of your photographs -- and next summer we will try to make sure of getting the South Berwick part taken.

Believe me yours
gratefully and sincerely

Sarah O. Jewett

Notes

Street: Jewett writes from the Boston home of Annie Fields.

Harmon Elms: A York Harbor hotel of the 19th century was named Harmon House, 1890 proprietor J. H. Varrell. Jewett may refer to elms associated with this hotel. One may speculate that the Harmon elms became the Chantrey elms in *Deephaven*; a Woodbury drawing of these appears at the beginning of "Deephaven Society" in the 1893 edition of *Deephaven*.

Donnell house: The Donnell House was a resort hotel at Long Sands beach, York Beach, ME. In the 1890s, the manager was B. G. Donnell. It opened in the early 1870s and burned in about 1897. Information about the proprietors and their cat in the period Jewett refers to (about 1855-1865) has not yet been located. Since Jewett was 21 in 1870, she must not be remembering this particular hotel, but perhaps an earlier one established by the Donnells. Because of the fast expanding market for beach hotel space after the Civil War and the frequency of fires, hotel proprietors fairly often expanded or rebuilt.

The manuscript of this letter is held by the Small Library, University of Virginia, Special Collections MSS 6218, Sarah Orne Jewett Papers. The envelope associated with this letter is addressed to 704 Tremont St., Boston. Transcription and notes by Terry Heller, Coe College.

Comments

Though Jewett says nothing direct here about photographs for her book, she implies that the 1886 and projected 1887 photos are two parts of one project. It seems very likely, then, that this letter concerns the collaboration on photographic illustrations for *Deephaven*.

Jewett says that as of December 1886, she had seen only a few of Coleman's photographs. This letter, then, seems to date the beginning of active collaboration on making photos to the summer of 1886, making unlikely the 1883 starting date given in Blanchard and her sources. The collaboration may have extended into the summer of 1887, though the chronology below indicates that this plan probably went unrealized. Further, as indicated in the chronology below, in the summer of 1886, Lane was traveling in Europe. She may not have participated in any *Deephaven* photos during that summer.

As it turns out, none of the 45 photos in the Houghton *Deephaven* collection manifestly shows a South Berwick scene, while the Woodbury illustrations of 1893 include images of South Berwick, such as the interior of Jewett's birth home. This observation rather strongly suggests that the plan to make more *Deephaven* photos in the summer of 1887 did not work out, probably because of the illness and death of Jewett's uncle. It is likely that *all* or nearly all of Coleman's *Deephaven* photos were taken in the summer of 1886.

The one photo Jewett describes is of the harbor road, with its elms. Probably this photo was not made for *Deephaven*, or at least, it is not among those associated with the book in the Houghton Library collection. The coast road photo (H63) lacks elms, and the coast road (now part of Highway 1A) was not then the harbor road. However, the Chantrey elms illustration by Marcia Woodbury in the 1893 edition of *Deephaven* may suggest the content of Coleman's photo.

Emma Coleman's Description of the Collaboration

This passage is from the Emma Lewis Coleman Papers at Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Library: "Untitled biographical study of Charlotte Alice Baker (1833-1909)," dated in 1933. This document duplicates “From the Letters of The Two New England Teachers,” in the Papers of Charlotte Alice Baker, also at Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Library.

I am grateful to Heather Harrington, Associate Librarian, Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Library, for her generous assistance in providing long-distance access to this document and information about the second copy.

Miss Baker's and Miss Lane's vacations were usually spent in the White Mountains or at York Harbor. Miss Baker was a skilful driver, easily guiding two and occasionally four horses over the New Hampshire Hills, but she had little respect for other women drivers, "Look out", she would say, "here comes a fool woman driving"! There was greater variety in York, where we packed paint-box and the clumsy tripod camera into the carriage, usually "a canopy top" and jogged along shore, or along a country road until some picture held us. The kindly farmer- and fisher-folk helped us, and we made many valuable records of house and field industries. Since the early 1880's conditions have changed, and where then, the charcoal-burner built his kiln, one now finds the summer visitor's smart cottage.

Sarah Jewett often drove down from South Berwick and under her direction we illustrated her charming "Deephaven", in which she describes the shore from Kittery Point to Bald Head Cliff. (p. 95)

Comments

To date, this short note is the only known contemporary document describing the collaboration that produced the Coleman *Deephaven* photos. Nearly 50 years later, Coleman remembered mainly that she photographed the coastal landscape represented in Jewett's book.

I find it particularly interesting that Coleman reports being engaged in at least *three* distinct but potentially overlapping projects in the 1880s: making art images, documenting a changing society, and collaborating on a set of photos for *Deephaven*. I explore these projects more fully below.

It is important to note carefully how little this account says directly about the *Deephaven* project. While Coleman *does* say that she and Baker and Lane made art photos and documented York County life and work with the help of locals, she *does not* say that this work overlapped with the *Deephaven* photos. Still, she at least implies that these projects took place at roughly the same time.

The 1907 extra-illustrated copy of *Deephaven*

A Doyle Auctions (New York) notice.

[PHOTOGRAPHY - COLEMAN, EMMA LEWIS] JEWETT, SARAH ORNE. *Deephaven*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1885. Stated fourteenth edition, this copy extra-illustrated with photographs by Emma Lewis Coleman and inscribed by Coleman to C. Alice Baker in 1907. Contemporary half-brown morocco gilt over cloth boards, marbled endpapers, top edge gilt. 6 x 4 1/4 (15.6 x 11 cm); illustrated with approximately 43 sepia-toned photographs on mounts. Some spotting and small stains, binding lightly worn.

This photographically illustrated copy of *Deephaven* seems to be the possibly unique product of the 1883-86 collaboration between author Sarah Orne Jewett, photographer Emma Lewis Coleman, and historian C. Alice Baker, whose work on the lives of captives following the French and Indian War was completed by Coleman. The group staged the photographs in the style of Millet and possibly posed for them as well. It has been suggested that these photographs were intended for an 1893 edition of the book by the Riverside Press, which in the end was published in a limited edition in 1894 with illustrations by Charles and Marcia Woodbury. See Blanchard, *Paula. Sarah Orne Jewett*, 1994, p. 225. Provenance: From the Library of Leslie Katz, founder of the Eakins Press.

Comments

Adam Sonstegard (Cleveland State University) discovered this on-line report from Doyle Auctions in New York City of the 25 November 2013 sale of an extra-illustrated copy of *Deephaven*.

When Sonstegard pointed to this auction notice, it was the only easily available information about the only known copy of an extra-illustrated *Deephaven*. Janet Blyberg, who curated an Old York Historical Society exhibit on Coleman in 2015, carefully researched Coleman's work, located the buyer of this volume, Caroline Schimmel, and persuaded her to allow its inclusion in the exhibit. With Blyberg's help, I was able to contact Regan Kladstrup, Director, Special Collections Processing, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania. The 1907 copy, she reported, is now part of the Caroline Schimmel Collection at the University of Pennsylvania. Kladstrup provided plentiful descriptive

information and photos of pages from the 1907 copy.

The auction description says there are approximately 43 photos; examining the copy shows that there are exactly 43 photos. This means that two of the photos in the Houghton collection are not included: H35 and H85.

The auction ad describes the photos as "on mounts," but this is not the case. Kladstrup reports that Coleman disassembled an 1885 reprint, added in new leaves at the correct locations for the photo prints, rebound the book, trimmed a number of the prints to fit well on their pages, and finally placed and firmly glued down each, taking care that no pages would stick together.

A Chronology of Relevant Dates

The main purpose of this chronology is to present an overview of the years relevant to the *Deephaven* collaboration, showing to some extent how the collaboration appears within the contexts of the four women's lives.

1793 Approximate birth year for *Deephaven* character, Katharine Brandon, Kate Lancaster's great-aunt.

1832 3 August. Birth of Susan Minot Lane.
1833 11 April. Birth of Charlotte Alice Baker.

1849 3 September. Birth of Sarah Orne Jewett.

1853 Baker and Lane meet and fall in love.
25 August. Birth of Emma Lewis Coleman.
Approximate birth year of *Deephaven* characters: Kate Lancaster and Helen Denis.

1856-1864 Baker and Lane operate the Chicago Academy, where they befriend Robert Collyer, who also becomes a close friend of Sarah Orne Jewett and Annie Adams Fields.

1864 Approximate year in which Baker and Lane opened a school in Boston.

1870 Baker's autobiographical story, "The Doctor's Little Girl" appeared in *Merry's Museum* children's magazine, where Jewett almost certainly read it.

1873 "The Shore House," Jewett's first *Deephaven* sketch, later revised to become the first two chapters of the novel.

1874 February. Lane loses sight in her right eye. Her health remained precarious for the rest of her life.

At about this time, Coleman becomes acquainted with Baker and Lane when all three were tutoring "the daughters of German consul Barthold Schlesinger at his Southwood estate in Brookline, MA." At about the same time, Coleman takes up photography. (Bischoff, p. 65).

1875 "Deephaven Cronies," Jewett's second sketch, later revised for the novel as "Deephaven Society," "The Captains," "Danny," and "The Circus at Denby."

1876 "Deephaven Excursions," Jewett's third sketch, later revised for the novel as "Mrs. Bonny," "In Shadow," and "Miss Chauncey."

1877 April. *Deephaven* is published.
July. John Greenleaf Whittier writes Jewett to praise *Deephaven,* having read it for "the third time."
September. Baker and Jewett exchange letters about *Deephaven*.

1878 Dry plate technology makes "snapshot" photography practical, enabling photos like those Coleman made for *Deephaven* of ocean waves rolling in and splashing against rocks.
In about this year, Lane produced a painting of the Junkins Garrison near York.
In late September, Baker and Lane exchange notes concerning the 20 September death of Jewett's father. Like Jewett's letter of the previous September, these notes suggests a fair degree of intimacy between Jewett and the two educators.

1879 Jewett's story collection, *Old Friends and New.*
Baker, Lane and Coleman spend a summer in the Azores and Madeira, Portugal.
From about this time, the three women spend summers on Cutts Island, Kittery, ME, not far from York.

1881 Jewett's story collection, *Country By-Ways.*
Jewett's essay, "From a Mournful Villager," on "out-of-date or fast vanishing village fashions."
Lane travels in Europe.

1882 Baker's travel book, *A Summer in the Azores.*
With this dedication: “To S.M.L., my life-long friend and companion; and E.L.C., to whose affection I owe my summer in the Azores.” According to the guide to the Lane Family Papers, an extra-illustrated copy of this book

was made with photographs by Lane.

24 May - 25 October. Jewett travels in Europe with Annie Adams Fields

In about this year, Coleman made a photograph of the Junkins Garrison near York. See *Catalogue of the Collection of Relics in Memorial Hall, Deerfield, Mass. U.S.A.,* item 43.

1884 Jewett's story collection, *The Mate of the Daylight.*

Jewett's second novel, *A Country Doctor*, appeared close to 1 June. For all of this summer, until early September, she remained in or near South Berwick, hard at work on her next novel, *A Marsh Island*, which began serialization in January 1885. In September, she and Fields spent about 10 days on Long Island with the Eben Horsford family. Soon after, Jewett and her sister, Mary, traveled to Quebec.

1885 About 1 June. Jewett's third novel, *A Marsh Island.*

During June - September, Jewett divided her time between South Berwick and Manchester. Her letters indicate that she spent some time in York around the end of July, but she says nothing about seeing anyone; indeed, she indicates that she hopes to spend some time alone. On 5 August she wrote to Horace Parker Chandler from South Berwick, reporting that a young man from Portland, ME, had attempted but failed to take "proper" photos of the colonial-era house where she was born. This suggests that she was not yet familiar with Coleman as a photographer, for surely Coleman would have been interested in this house and could have made successful photos.

1886 Jewett's story collection, *A White Heron.*

Lane travels in Europe during the summer (See the Lane Family Papers, Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Library, and Lockwood, p. 172 note 11).

Jewett's "York Garrison: 1640" published; The garrison could be the Junkins Garrison photographed by Coleman and painted by Lane.

In the summer, Jewett was very busy working on *The Story of the Normans*, published at the end of the year with an 1887 copyright date. Finishing a first draft in early June, she felt freer thereafter, but she still had much work to do. She also felt generally confined to South Berwick because of her uncle William's declining health. She spent most of September with Annie Fields at Richfield Springs, NY. and then in Manchester.

28 December. In a letter, Jewett thanks Coleman for sending some photos from the previous summer, looks forward to making more in South Berwick next summer. If, as Coleman indicates, Jewett went to York to oversee the *Deephaven* photos, it seems likely that such trips occurred in late July and early August.

1887 Jewett's uncle, William Jewett, suffered his final illness in the summer, dying 4 August. Jewett made only brief trips away from South Berwick. After his death, she spent much of August in the Boston area and much of September in South Berwick. If any photos for *Deephaven* were made that summer, this most likely took place in September, before the beginning of Baker and Lane's school year.

1888 Jewett's correspondence shows that she was in the South Berwick area at various times each month, including most of June, when she visited both York and Wells. In a June letter, she reports visiting a number of old friends in Wells, some of whom were models for characters in her stories. During much of August and September, she was with Annie Fields, traveling and in the Boston area.

Jewett's essay, "A Plea for Front Yards," showing her interest in preserving customs.

Jewett's story collection, *The King of Folly Island.*

December. Baker and Coleman travel to Montreal, Canada, to research Massachusetts captives of the French and Indian Wars.

Eastman Kodak marketed a film camera, cost $25; 100 photos developed for $10.

1889 Jewett's correspondence shows that she spent a good portion of this summer in South Berwick and visited York as well. During this summer, Jewett's sister, Mary, traveled to Europe.

1890-92 Baker, Lane and Coleman cooperate in the restoration of the Frary House in Deerfield, MA., culminating in a housewarming ball on 25 August, 1892, Coleman's birthday.

1891 In a letter to Fields believed to date from January 1891, Jewett mentions that she now owns her own camera.

1892 1 February. Richard Watson Gilder, editor at *Century Magazine*, replies to Jewett's suggestion that "the young artist" Charles H. Woodbury provide illustrations for the magazine. He notes that the magazine more often seeks drawings of figures rather than of landscapes.

During the summer, Jewett and Fields travel in Europe, returning in October.

1893 21 January. Sarah Wyman Whitman writes to Jewett, indicating that the Woodburys will illustrate a new *Deephaven*, perhaps instead of Whitman.

3 February. Death of Susan Minot Lane.

10 March. Jewett writes to Louisa Dresel, suggesting that the idea for a new illustrated edition of *Deephaven* recently came out of a discussion with Houghton, Mifflin. If the Dresel letter Jewett is answering exists, it could provide more useful detail. Harvard's Houghton Library may hold this letter among several from Dresel to Jewett.

April - July. Marcia Woodbury keeps a sketchbook of notes and ideas for *Deephaven* illustrations.

November. A new edition of Jewett's *Deephaven* (copyright 1894) appears in two formats -- large paper limited edition of 250 and "regular" format --, both with illustrations by Charles and Marcia Woodbury.

1896 Jewett's best-known novel, *The Country of the Pointed Firs*.

1897 Baker's *True Stories of New England Captives Carried to Canada*, illustrated in part with Coleman's photographs of locations and buildings and with Lane's painting of the Junkins Garrison House.

1899 Baker's mother dies. Thereafter, Baker resides mainly in Boston with Coleman.

1907 Coleman creates an extra-illustrated copy of *Deephaven*, using an 1885 printing, adding her photos. She gives the copy to Baker a few days before her 72nd birthday.

Coleman, *Historic and Present Day Guide to Old Deerfield*, illustrated with her photographs, and dedicated to Baker. The photos are full page size, landscape oriented photos appearing sideways, with the top to the left. The subjects are nearly all landscape locations and houses significant in local history.

1909 22 May. Death of Charlotte Alice Baker.

24 June. Death of Sarah Orne Jewett.

1924 *Epitaphs in the Old Burying-Ground at Deerfield, Mass. Copied by C. Alice Baker and Emma L. Coleman*, with photos of the ground and of some stones.

1925 Coleman's *New England Captives Carried to Canada*. Includes an illustration from Lane's painting of the Junkins Garrison House and a photo of Baker.

1935 Coleman contributes photographs for George Dow's *Everyday Life in the Massachusetts Bay Colony,* many of these showing rural workers at crafts, farming and housekeeping. Plate 66, "A Back Door Scene," a detail from a larger photo, shows the same subject and setting as H61 "She was a great smoker" in the Houghton *Deephaven* illustrations.

1942 20 February. Death of Emma Lewis Coleman.

An Emerging Narrative -- What the Textual Documents Show

The materials presented above provide the beginnings of a new tentative narrative of the *Deephaven* collaboration.

Almost certainly, there was an 1880s collaboration between Jewett, Baker and Coleman to produce a set of photos for illustrating *Deephaven*. Several archives hold artifacts to prove this, and Coleman herself affirms it.

Circumstantial evidence suggests that this collaboration did not begin before 1886. As reported in the above chronology, Jewett says in a letter of 5 August 1885 that she engaged a young male photographer from Portland, ME, to take photos of her South Berwick home. Were she acquainted with Coleman as a photographer at this time, almost certainly she would have asked Coleman to take the pictures. Further, in Jewett's 1886 letter to Coleman, she implies that she has not previously seen many photos by Coleman, suggesting that their first work together took place in the summer of 1886.

Probably, most of the *Deephaven* photos were made in the summer of 1886, though it appears that not all of the 1886 photos were included in the final set. Lane -- who traveled abroad that summer -- probably was not involved in making the photos of 1886. However, she may well have participated in other aspects of the project, for she certainly influenced Coleman's practice and may well have supported the work both before and after the 1886 photos were made. While there was a plan to continue the project in the summer of 1887, the chronology shows that Jewett was preoccupied that summer, caring for her dying uncle. More important, as will be seen below, there are no photos in the final set of the village of South Berwick, which was the 1887 plan; instead, all of the photos are from the surrounding York county, mainly near the village of York.

The chronology also sheds light upon the content of the photos that it may be useful to

keep in mind as I turn to the next main parts of this report, presentation and discussion of visual materials, the photos and the extra-illustrated copy. The chronology begins with 1793, the approximate birth date of the fictional Katharine Brandon, great-aunt of *Deephaven's* Kate Lancaster. The account of the collaboration that comes through Blanchard and her sources asserts that the photos show Baker, Lane, and cooperative locals in costumes enacting colonial period crafts and activities. However, even one of the oldest persons mentioned in the book was born well after the American Revolution and lived most of her adult life in the decades before the Civil War. The main characters, Kate and Helen, are represented as a few years younger than Jewett herself, whose adult life began after the Civil War. In short, there really is nothing "colonial" about the events or characters in *Deephaven*, even though the village's history and architecture are rooted in the colonial period. It would be nonsensical, even in the old-fashioned village of Deephaven, to view the story as about colonial rather than contemporary New England. Photos of people in costume enacting colonial life would be anachronistic as illustrations.

Probably one should keep in mind certain things not yet known. Just as it appears Coleman and Jewett may have made photos in 1886 that were not finally included, it also is possible that Coleman made photos on her own and at other times that eventually *were* included. The documentary record of the collaboration is blank from about 1886 until 1907. As yet nothing is known about what events led to the production of the 1907 copy. Completing the work on that copy could have involved Jewett, Baker and Lane, though Lane died in 1893, but it is possible Coleman made all the 1907 choices on her own.

It may prove possible to gain more knowledge about some of these questions. In a telephone conversation of 1 September 2021, Lorna Condon of Historic New England reported about the collection of glass plate negatives that Coleman gave to HNE in 1925. These plates came in sleeves, possibly with notes, though Condon was not certain that the sleeves were preserved when the plates were moved to new conservation sleeves. A future researcher could examine these and also the contact prints made from the negatives and any remaining other materials to determine whether the negatives are present for the Houghton's *Deephaven* prints and whether any information has been preserved about the dates, locations, and personnel in those photos. Janet Blyberg notes, as well, that the Old York Historical Society holds a large number of Coleman's original prints, most of which contain textual material about dates and locations.

I turn next to examining the visual materials.

Photography in the 1880s

A grasp of the mechanics of photography in the 1880s is helpful to understanding several important aspects of the collaboration and its visual products.

Coleman used the best technology for outdoor photography that was available at a reasonable cost in the 1880s. She reports that she used a portable camera and tripod. This equipment required dry glass plate negatives. By 1878, dry glass negative plates could be prepared in advance or easily purchased in quantity. Though they were somewhat bulky, they were much more portable than the previously available wet plates, which required carrying chemical preparations to wet and then develop the plates at the time the photo was taken. This process required a portable dark room, a black hood at the back of the camera beneath which the photographer set up the shot and prepared the plate. She then would come out to expose it, and then returned beneath the hood to develop the negative. Dry plates could be exposed on location and developed later in a dark room. This set up, though far from the portability of Kodak's hand-held film camera that entered the market in 1888, still allowed photographers like Coleman to purchase equipment and supplies at prices she could afford, to take her camera to almost any location, and to fairly quickly set up and take photos.

When Janet C. Blyberg of the Old York Historical Society organized a 2015 exhibition, "Emma Lewis Coleman: Photographs of Maine," she followed the few clues available to determine Coleman's process. Blyberg believes that Coleman almost certainly used equipment that was popular in the 1880s and 1890s, a "view camera" with a slow-drop shutter:

> This style of camera was popular from the 1880s through the 1890s. It could be folded and carried in a wooden case, which made it a favorite with landscape photographers. A collection of Coleman’s 5 x 8-inch glass-plate negatives at Historic New England indicates

that she must have used a camera very much like this one. (See Wikipedia for "view camera" and "shutter.")

Blyberg notes that the slow drop shutter enabled the sort of precise stopping of motion that allowed Coleman to successfully photograph waves breaking on rocks like H55 in the Houghton collection. Of a Coleman photo of sheep, Blyberg says:

> Before [the slow drop shutter], ... exposure generally was controlled by removing and replacing the lens cap. The slow-drop shutter allowed photographers to make images using faster exposure times. Initially, shutters were in the form of attachments to be fitted to the camera by the photographer .... Later they became an integral part of the camera. Shorter exposure times meant photographers could achieve sharper images. Animals -- naturally difficult to pose for photographs -- were almost always rendered blurry. Coleman was clearly very pleased with the sharpness of this photograph [of sheep] as she exhibited it at the annual Boston Camera Club and Royal Photographic Society (London) exhibitions of 1892.

Another well-known Coleman photograph illustrates the advantages of this equipment in capturing a sharp image of subjects in motion: "C. Alice Baker in costume as a woman dragging a calf, Deerfield, Mass., 1880s."

Coleman's use of 5 x 8 inch dry plates also is notable. By using 5 x 8 inch plates, Coleman chose not to use one of the standard sizes of commercially available prepared plates; either 6.5 x 8.5 inch full plates or 4.75 x 6.5 inch half plates. Plate negative size is of particular importance if one is planning a collaboration in which prints of the images will be bound into an existing book. During the 1886-1907 period, making good quality prints that were larger or smaller than the glass negatives was not practical. The size of the glass negative determined the size of the print, which was exactly the size of the negative. To get different sized prints without elaborate equipment, one had either to use a multi-lens camera or different sized plates or to trim the print. Whether they anticipated a printed edition with the photos included or only extra-illustrated copies, Coleman would need to be able to size her *Deephaven* images to function in a particular book format. For the extra-illustrated copy, she would be forced to make photos that could be trimmed to fit into a book that was 4.25 x 6 inches. For example, in *A Noble and Dignified Stream* (p. 153) is a reproduction of Coleman's "The Basketmaker," erroneously said to have been included in an extra-illustrated copy of *Deephaven.* According to the legend, this print is 4.5 x 7.5, too large for a book page and virtually impossible to trim to a workable size.

Blyberg points out that Coleman trimmed some of her prints for the 1907 copy of *Deephaven*. In that copy a number of the prints have been trimmed slightly in comparison to the prints in the Houghton collection. As noted above, in *Dignified Stream* is Coleman's "Sewall's Bridge" (p. 181), where it is described as 6.75 x 9.25, larger than Coleman's usual plates and far too large to fit into *Deephaven*. However, a Houghton collection print (H31) which *was* included in the 1907 copy shows just a portion of the right side of "Sewall's Bridge." My measurement of the Houghton image is about 4.75 x 3.5. "Sewall's Bridge," then, probably was *not* made with the intention of using it in *Deephaven*. That it *was* included raises several questions, particularly about the degree to which Jewett finally was involved in determining which images would appear in the extra-illustrated copy.

Additional Sources

Robert Hirsch, *Seizing the Light: A History of Photography*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000.

Camera-Wiki.org:
Plate Camera: http://camera-wiki.org/wiki/Plate_camera
Plate Sizes: http://camera-wiki.org/wiki/Plate_sizes

Coleman's Photographic Projects

In Coleman's known photographs of the 1880s, one can distinguish three kinds that seem relevant to the collaboration on *Deephaven*: documentary, didactic and dramatic. These correspond to familiar genres in the visual and literary arts, genres that may be defined for the purposes here by what they seem designed to communicate to their viewers. These differing purposes for photographs show that Coleman was engaged in the contemporary conversation about the purposes of photography Robert Hirsch examines in "Suggesting the Subject: The Evolution of Pictorialism," Chapter 9 of *Seizing the Light*. These three kinds of photos correspond as well to three different projects

Coleman identifies in her brief description of her work with Baker, Lane and Jewett.

All representational photographs are documentary, purporting to show how something appeared at the time of the photo. Most familiar, perhaps, are news photos showing people, places, objects and events for the primary purpose of allowing viewers to "see" them. Among the photos Coleman assigned to or made for *Deephaven*, the majority are of this kind. They are photographs of locations, mainly buildings and landscapes, meant to show readers the fictional Deephaven and its environs. In fact, they are photographs of the York, Maine, area as it appeared in the 1880s. These photos belong to a Coleman project broader than illustrating Jewett's book, for Coleman, like Baker, also was a historian. Particularly in her later work with Baker on the history of New England captives of the French and Indian Wars, Coleman was interested in visual history. During her career, Coleman made a number of photos showing aspects of New England life that were changing or disappearing. At least two photos in the *Deephaven* selection may belong to this project: Captain Lant at work (H29) and the sailors' knots photo (H37).

A representational photo becomes didactic when it comes to seem to the viewer that the photographer wants to communicate ideas as well as information. Coleman describes part of her collaboration in York County, Maine, with Lane and Baker -- in which Jewett was *not* included -- as seeking out "pictures," both for her camera and for Lane's painting. While the results of this work also were documentary, they often were meant to convey meaning that the artists found or saw in their subjects and attempted to capture in their work. Among Coleman's better known photos of this kind is "Gathering Faggots, -- York River, Maine" (1883 or 1884), held by the York Historical Society and reproduced in both Lockwood and *Dignified Stream*. The photograph shows a seemingly elderly woman in a dirt road, carrying a loose bundle of faggots. She is a small figure in an expansive, but enclosing landscape mainly of trees, wild except for the road and her presence. While one could read the image as simply the documenting of a rural woman at work, the knowledgeable viewer knows this was not a snap-shot, that a camera and tripod had to be set up, the frame planned, the lighting controlled so far as possible, the figure posed in a particular posture, etc. In short, though a good deal of planning and labor was required for any photograph of the 1880s, this one required thought about the meaning it would communicate. As I am not an art historian, I will not speculate about specific meanings in this photograph, except to point out that it seems to be in dialogue with other familiar works of art. One of these surely is Jean-François Millet's "Women Carrying Faggots"(1858) held by New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. Any thoughtful viewer looking at the two works together will easily begin constructing ways in which the two images relate and converse.

Another well-known example of a didactic photo that is not among those for *Deephaven* is "C. Alice Baker in costume as a woman dragging a calf, Deerfield, Mass., 1880s," held by Historic New England. Also depicting a rural woman at work, this photo has additional interesting elements that may be relevant to the collaboration. While knowledgeable viewers connected with several New England historical societies believe that Baker was the model for "Gathering Faggots," this assertion so far lacks textual support, and I am skeptical that the woman depicted looks like Baker. Viewers are reasonably certain that Baker was the model for the calf photo, even though the model's face is hidden, because Coleman probably gave it this title. Like the faggot photo, this one also seems to be in dialogue with Millet, particularly his images of shepherds, and it suggests its own meanings about 19th-century rural women's labor, which often included animal husbandry. Notably, this was a technically difficult photo, in which careful control of shutter speed, for one thing, was important. That the calf's tail is not a blur, along with the unnatural lighting and shallow depth of field show Coleman stretching her camera's ability to stop motion and, thereby, reveal the effort of the woman's labor.

I do not see didactic images among the Houghton *Deephaven* photos, but I am not sure about this. My main point here is that such photos were an important part of Coleman's photography in the 1880s. Probably her experience of making such images with Lane at her side informed her work on a number of the photos I am calling dramatic.

Coleman's photos in general have been characterized as theatrical, usually in a pejorative sense. Blanchard, following her sources, describes them as "obviously staged" and seems to deprecate Jewett for liking them. This way of looking at the photos seems clearly problematic. First, it isn't true of the large portion of her work I have seen, for that is primarily documentary. It seems inaccurate as well to apply the term pejoratively to her didactic work, for one would expect it to be composed in ways

similar to representational painting, with attention to the thematic visual organization of picture elements -- iconography, arrangement of space, posing of figures, etc. Another main problem is that for the *Deephaven* collaboration, one would expect at least *some* of the photos to be dramatic -- they show actors/models representing characters engaged in activities that are described in the book. Such images may be most familiar in painting, where one often sees depictions of historical or fictional persons engaged in historical events or fictional scenes. These require the viewer's prior knowledge of the subject for full appreciation. In the *Deephaven* collection there clearly are staged, dramatic photos. One of the most interesting of these shows Helen, Kate, and a rural woman meeting at a well (H53). Lockwood analyzes this image in detail; I summarize her work and add my own observations below. Below I also discuss several other images in the Houghton collection that fall into this category.

During the 1880s, Coleman was making documentary, didactic, and dramatic photographs. Some of her documentary photos and all her dramatic photos I have seen were included in her *Deephaven* selection. Probably she did not include her didactic images in this selection, in part because they would tend to point away from the story they were to illustrate. Furthermore, it is quite possible that a more experienced and sophisticated eye would identify didactic elements in the *Deephaven* selection, when, for example, images suggest meanings not connected with the novel or even opposing or complicating aspects of the narrative.

Recognizing these three photographic projects raises other questions about looking at Coleman's photos that it may be well to point out before presenting and discussing them.

One claim frequently repeated about Colman's didactic and dramatic photos is that the figures are shown in period costume. It seems obvious that everyone in the *Deephaven* photos is wearing contemporary clothing; though the local women are generally behind current fashion, they are historical only from the very limited perspective of the young protagonists. The two didactic photos mentioned above, the women with faggots and a calf, may be more problematic. If Baker is the model, then her "work clothing" probably could be called a costume, not her customary dress. The two women are similarly dressed in what probably is typical work dress for farm women in the late 19th century. While it is possible that such women had worn similar clothing for two centuries, I believe it would be difficult to establish that these figures represent rural female labor in an earlier period.

I believe the idea of "period" costume -- along with the occasional assertion that the photos show Maine "peasants" -- probably arises from associating some of her photos with Millet. Perhaps, also, the involvement of all four collaborators in aspects of the Colonial Revival movement and in historical preservation has suggested what seems to me the confused idea that many of Coleman's photos were intended to present the past. While it certainly is possible to make photos of enactments of the past (see the two photos of Coleman referenced above in "The Collaborators"), this would seem an odd task to set oneself with a medium uniquely able to capture the present. Coleman has said that one purpose of her photography was to show processes and places that were disappearing after the Civil War. The above mentioned photos of Captain Lant in the *Deephaven* selection may belong to this project.

The problem of period costume also raises the issue of knowing when figures are "in costume." Coleman apparently labeled the calf photo, saying Baker is "in costume." What does this mean?

In *Deephaven*, "The Brandon House and the Lighthouse," a Boston shop-girl mistakes Kate for a local resident during a lighthouse tour:

> "She was dressed that day in a costume we both frequently wore, of gray skirts and blue sailor-jacket, and her boots were much the worse for wear. The celebrated Lancaster complexion was rather darkened by the sun."

This costume of skirts, sailor-jacket and scuffed boots never appears in the Coleman photos. Being "in costume" in the book means wearing clothing that disguises one's social and geographical identity. Kate's disguise at the lighthouse is unintended, for we are told this was what the friends typically wore when out and about.

Though the two friends sometimes wear unconventional hats in the *Deephaven* photos, they always are dressed for social interaction rather than for their typical outdoor activities: fishing, hiking the woods or beach, or reading on the rocks. They usually are fashionably dressed. Local characters, however, appear markedly different. They usually are shown either in work clothing or in out-of-fashion dress.

It seems, then, that when constructing the photos, the collaborators made some choices about costuming different from those Jewett made in the book, especially in dressing Kate and Helen. In fact, it is difficult if not impossible to know when any figure in the *Deephaven* photos is "in costume." Several of those knowledgeable about these materials believe that Baker and Lane were models for some photos, and that local people also functioned as models, as Coleman suggested in her biography of Baker. To me the ideas of modeling and costuming are more complicated than one might assume, and I am not confident that I can sort this out or that this is even very important. Here are a few observations that may be helpful.

Photo H29 shows Captain Lant at a task involving cord, perhaps net repair. H37 shows perhaps the same person again, seemingly representing Captain Lant teaching one of the friends intricate knots. Who is modeling and who is in costume in these photos? To me, it seems that no one is in costume, but that both figures are models. They represent characters, so the photo is not of them, but uses them to present fictional characters. However, one may note that the woman in H37 is wearing the wrong clothing. She is not in the characteristic costume that disguises Kate at the lighthouse, but in the sort of dress and jacket one might wear for a social call and for daily at home activities of young women "on vacation."

In discussing the photos in the following material, I will point to figures who may have been modeled by Baker and Coleman, but I consider these identifications uncertain. I have been able to view only a very few portraits of any of the collaborators, except for Jewett, and I lack confidence that I can identify them in Coleman's photos. In the absence of textual guidance from Coleman or another contemporary observer, I consider all such identifications at least somewhat speculative.

Goals of the Collaboration

It is reasonable to assume, as most commentators have, that the purpose of the collaboration was to produce and publish an illustrated edition of *Deephaven*, perhaps the one that was published at the end of 1893. As that edition does *not* use the Coleman photos, one may wonder why. By what turn of events did illustrating the 1894 copyright edition become a second collaboration, this time between Jewett and Marcia and Charles Woodbury? Exploring this question opens a number of perhaps surprising complications that can radically alter how the purpose of the collaboration is understood.

Coleman's identification of three distinct photo projects suggests that two of these may have provided images included in the 45 photos in the Houghton collection. Some of these photos clearly were made specifically to illustrate elements in the novel, the "dramatic" images representing Kate, Helen and other characters. But the majority of the photos are of buildings and landscapes, "documentary." Any of these may have been made originally without the idea of their becoming illustrations and, then, were chosen for the book because they would effectively suggest buildings and scenes in the story. Below is a short list of the photos that likely were made only for *Deephaven*.

All are identified by the numbers I have given them below in "The Houghton Photo Collection 2." These numbers indicate the sequence numbers of the images in the Houghton Library.

H09 -- Mrs. Patton
H13 -- Mrs. Patton
H29 -- Captain Lant seated.
Coleman made a number of photos of rural crafts; this as well as H37 may be part of that series.
H37 -- Captain Lant teaching knots to either Helen or Kate.
H41 -- Kate and Helen in a boat with Danny.
H45 -- Mrs. Captain Sands
H47 -- Kate and Helen walking
H49 -- Kate and Helen walking
H53 -- Kate and Helen receiving a drink of water
H61 -- Mrs. Bonny, the great smoker
H87 -- Kate and Helen at the shore
H89 -- Unnamed friend watching the two women depart.
Same model as Mrs. Captain Sands (H45)

While it may seem obvious that these photos showing characters must have been made for *Deephaven* under Jewett's direct supervision, probably in the summer of 1886, this is by no means certain. There are several complicating factors.

One problem emerges from studying the 6 photos showing Kate and/or Helen. A better eye than mine may arrive at a different conclusion, but I am not sure that the same models for Kate and Helen appear in every photo. To me, it

appears there are three or possibly four models playing these characters. If there are three or four models representing Kate and Helen, one may wonder about several things, certainly about the intentions of the collaboration, and perhaps about whether all these photos were made during the same summer. If most viewers of these photos would notice different models portraying the two friends, then the photos may become less suitable for a published illustrated edition.

Another problem arises if one comes to conclude, along with Libby Bischof and myself, that photos representing Mrs. Captain Sands (H45 and H89) are self-portraits of Coleman. Not only does the model resemble other photos of Coleman, but she also appears much younger than would be expected for the wife of the elderly Captain Sands. Coleman would have turned 33 in 1886, 54 in 1907. Almost certainly, this model's age is between those two numbers. This possibility could radically alter what may seem the most obvious way of understanding the extra-illustrated copy and the Houghton *Deephaven* collection. If these are self-portraits, how did they come to be included in the two collections of images in existence today?

The "obvious" answer that I first assumed is that Jewett and her friends decided they wanted to include two images of Mrs. Captain Sands in the book and that Coleman would be a good model. One problem with accepting this idea is the model's apparent youth, as noted above. Another is that, while it seems clear that *some* of the photos were made in consultation with Jewett and Baker, there is no evidence that *all* were. In fact, there is evidence to the contrary. As will be noted in the materials below, several of the photos in their original size were far too large for inclusion in the extra-illustrated copy and, therefore, the prints were trimmed to fit, sometimes radically. While the women may have envisioned a larger format book, that idea doesn't fit well with the fact that the photos with Kate and Helen almost certainly were sized to fit the extra-illustrated copy without trimming. Therefore, we can be reasonably certain only that the 6 photos showing Kate and/or Helen were made under Jewett's direction. Coleman could have made any of the others without Jewett's input and after 1886.

It is important to keep in mind that the extra-illustrated copy dates from 1907 and that there is no date at all currently available for the Houghton *Deephaven* collection. In the Houghton materials is an envelope, described below, that may at some time have held the 45 prints. Its date and provenance are unknown. That it is addressed to Jewett's sister, Mary, from Houghton Mifflin suggests that the publisher may have seen the images at some point and, perhaps after Jewett's death, returned them to Mary Rice Jewett. While this information is tantalizing, it actually reveals very little. But it does underline the fact that Coleman could have made photos for *Deephaven* at any time before 1907, and this makes it possible that she added the self-portraits for her own purposes. I take up this possibility at a later point. Of course, any of the remaining images not on the above list *could* have been made especially for *Deephaven*, but it is difficult to be sure (for example H21, boys fishing).

The very limited information available about the dates of the photos suggests several possible explanations for the publication at the end of 1893 of an illustrated edition that includes none of Coleman's photos. Among the possible explanations, the following seem plausible.

- The project was not completed in the 1880s, and when Houghton Mifflin came to agree to an illustrated edition, Coleman was not in a position to help Jewett complete a photo-illustrated edition.
- The project was completed, but Jewett and/or her publisher decided that the greater flexibility of hand-drawn illustration would produce a more attractive book.
- The four women never intended publication, but rather just to enjoy doing something interesting together. Perhaps publishing the photos in a new edition was not their goal.
- The women intended from the beginning only to make one or more extra-illustrated copies for their mutual pleasure.
- For some reason, the project remained unfinished after the 1880s, but Coleman came back to it later, when she thought of giving Baker the extra-illustrated copy.

These possibilities are not all mutually exclusive. Mainly, they underline how little can be asserted about the goals of the collaboration.

From the materials available, one may speculate about how the illustrated edition of 1893-4 came to include the Woodbury illustrations rather than Coleman's. It seems reasonably clear in Jewett's correspondence, reported in the above chronology, that the idea for a new illustrated edition of *Deephaven* first gained traction with Houghton Mifflin early in 1893. While it is not known whether Jewett & Houghton Mifflin considered using the Coleman photos, it appears that Jewett may first have asked Sarah W. Whitman to do illustrations as

well as the cover, and then turned to her friends, the Woodburys. If Coleman was asked to help with the project, she may have been too occupied with her friends, Baker and Lane, given Lane's approaching death, which occurred just as the Woodburys were beginning their work on *Deephaven*. It would be helpful to know more about how Lane died and whether there was any extended final illness. At about this time, also, according to Babette Ann Boleman, Jewett prepared an annotated copy of *Deephaven* to guide the Woodburys in their work. In the discussion below of the Houghton photos, I have noted when Woodbury drawings use the same topics as Coleman photos.

Boleman's account of the collaboration between Jewett and the Woodburys, though she says nothing about Coleman, sheds light upon this process and suggests that Jewett's ideas about illustrations probably were influenced by her work with Coleman. Boleman notes the long acquaintance between Jewett and Marcia Oakes Woodbury, both natives of South Berwick, ME. She says that the artists spent several months in 1893 at the Oakes family home in South Berwick, a short walk from Jewett's house, and consulted regularly with Jewett about their work:

> Sarah first took a copy of her book (now in the possession of the writer) and wrote in it various suggestions, usually addressed to "Susan" [*Woodbury's actual first name*] and frequently followed by a question mark to show her willingness to defer to the artists' opinions. Some of these penciled remarks show Miss Jewett's use of her own home as background for the story; she writes such hints as "The hall at home and interiors for this chapter?" and "Perhaps here the turn of our stairway at night with the clock -- pointing to a very late hour!" Again, she identifies for her artist friends certain landmarks or houses as she briefly notes "The Emerson house at York is the Carew House," "The Norman house or something like it, a small farm with wood about and the hill," "Sketch of the house at the cliff," and "Burying ground on 'Southside road' corner?" ... [M]ost of the author's intimations were acted upon, but the artists' ideas of what in the book lent itself to illustration must have prevailed in a number of cases, as a comparison of the volume containing these suggestions with Mrs. Woodbury's final list demonstrates. (p. 21)

The Woodburys did not use a drawing of the Emerson house at York in their illustrations, but the photo of Mrs. Carew's house in the Houghton collection (H27) almost certainly is of the Emerson house. While it is more difficult to be sure of this, the graveyard photo (H17) may be of the same location as the one Jewett suggests to the Woodburys.

The Houghton Photo Collection 1:

a manuscript list of instructions for placing the photos.

Following is a transcription of Sarah Orne Jewett Compositions and other papers, 1847-1909; Series: III. Diaries, financial agreements, and miscellany; [Illustrations for *Deephaven*]. bMS Am 1743.26, item 14. Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

Sequence 101-103. Not dated.

The items may be viewed here: https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$101i

The Houghton Library catalog indicates that all of the materials related to the *Deephaven* photos were bequeathed to the library in 1931 by Jewett's nephew, Theodore Jewett Eastman.

The author of this list is uncertain. Though I have no training in handwriting analysis, I am virtually certain that this document was not written by Jewett, the hand seeming quite distinct from her characteristic script. However, penciled at the top right of the first page is this note: "Illustrations for Deephaven." This *does* look like Jewett's handwriting from a particular period in her life, after her 1902 carriage accident. I cannot affirm that Jewett wrote that line, but if she did, almost certainly it was after September 1902. I should note as well that even if Jewett indeed made this note after 1902, that does not guarantee that she received this list and the photos it describes at that time.

Probably this list was made by Coleman, but only authoritative handwriting comparison is likely to establish this.

I have not included archivist notes in this transcription.

[*Page 1*]

To face 16.*

"We looked out of the window into pastures and pine woods"

17. "Well as I know the meeting-house"

19. "And then he got the chance to keep Deephaven light"

45. Our first caller .... a prim little old woman .... who wore a neat cap and front .... no bonnet .... and a little three cornered shawl with palm leaf figures over her shoulders"

~~58. Mr. Patton's farm at East Parish~~

55. "The house was a little way down the road .... unpainted and gambrel roofed .... the old lilac bushes that clustered round it were as tall as the eaves"

56. "She wore the same bonnet that she had when Kate was a child" ...."A well-preserved proper black straw bonnet and a useful lace veil to protect it from the weather"

58. Mr. Patton's farm at East Parish

64. "The grass was long & tangled and most of the stones leaned one way or another"

68. "The ruined wharves are fast disappearing"

69. And almost deserted except by small

[*Page 2*]

barefooted boys who sit on the edges to fish for perch"

70 "There were two schooners owned in town"

71 "All along shore ..... whaleboats which had been left to die a natural death"

82 "The old Carew house"

85 "Several other fine old houses in Deephaven"

89 Capt Lant brought out an old flag-bottomed chair ..... He looked like a well to do old English sparrow

98 "Sometimes a schooner came to one of the wharves to load with hay"

101 "A solemn company of lobsterpots"

111 "I'd settle down ashore, have a snug little house & farm it"

118 "learning some charmingly intricate ones from Capt. Lant the stranded mariner who lived on a farm two miles or so inland'

149. We used to eat mushrooms which grew in the suburbs of the town in wild luxuriance

163 "Kate and I cracked our clams on the gunwale of the boat"

[*Page 3*]

164. "Tide nearly out ... sea smooth & the low waves broke lazily .... Black rock looked large enough to be called an island"

167 "Our house sets high & she watches the sky"

168 After dinner Kate & I went for a walk through some pine woods"

169 "We wandered about for an hour or two to find some ferns ..... and home late in the afternoon"

[*Penciled mark* >]

190 "The land was uneven and full of ledges, and the people worked hard for their living"

203. "She was a great smoker"

204 "We had heard of the coast road"

205 "The highest rock of all"

208 "Sometimes we crossed pebbly beaches"

209 Over shaky bridges

214 To pitch pine trees we had seen before.

218 The old boat with its killick and painter stretched ashore

221 At a little distance from the land the waves were leaping high & breaking in white foam over the isolated ledges

[*Page 4*]

[222 *corrected*] It is not likely that anyone else will ever go there to live

224 There was a church which we had been told was the oldest in the region

225 Mifs Chauncy's house & fence

237 The distant steeples of Riverport

242 The great breakers come plunging in against the rocks

250. "Cherished volumes of poetry .... used to read them aloud to each other when we sat on our favorite corners of the rock"

253 Our friends ... were looking out from door and window to see us go by

Out of order*

177. Uncle Tobias lived on the ridge

188 We used to ask for a drink of water

189 East Point (Eastern Pt. York)

[*penciled addition*]

189 Short Sands (York

Notes

16: This text is double underlined.

order: The remaining items are set off on the left margin with a large open parenthesis.

The two "189" entries together have a wavy penciled line to the right of the two numbers.

The Houghton Photo Collection 2:

Notes and commentary on the photos

Here I present more materials about each item on the photo list above. These include:

- An extended quotation from the novel to provide fuller context for the photo. Quotations are from the 1877 text of *Deephaven*, which as far as I know, remained the same until the 1893-4 new edition, with illustrations by Charles H. and Marcia Oakes Woodbury. All page numbers in the transcribed photo list correspond to this edition.

- Identification by item number (H#) of the specific photo in the Houghton Library digital collection.

- A link to the Houghton's digital image.

- The facing page number assigned on the list above (AN: #), followed by the facing page number as it appears in University of Pennsylvania copy of the extra-illustrated *Deephaven*. (PC: #) .

- A report on the image as it appears in the University of Pennsylvania copy of the extra-illustrated *Deephaven*.

- Comments about the photos.

I have added in the Chapter titles. Doing so shows that two chapters have no images and that some chapters were more fully illustrated than others.

Each photo has the same penciled archivist note on the back: SOJ735.3 Ms Am 1743.26 (14). A few have a stamped number and a note that the photo is an illustration for *Deephaven*.

Also on the backs of nearly all of the photos are other lightly penciled and difficult to read notes. These are included and labeled AN (additional notes).

It is important to remain aware that the author of these additional notes is not known, but it seems evident that this person had reliable knowledge of which image belongs with which passage. One may reasonably assume that Coleman or Jewett made these notes.

Zoe Hill of the Houghton Library provided dimensions of these images. All are printed on paper that is 4.75 x 6.25 inches. With a little trimming, then, each page in the Houghton collection would fit on a page of the 1885 edition of *Deephaven*, the book overall measuring 4.25 x 6 inches.

Image sizes vary, but given the page size, one can estimate them fairly closely. And it appears that each image, after the page was trimmed, would fit easily on a page of the 1885 printing.

Examples of two portrait orientation images measured by Hill.

H01 is 3 7/16 x 4 7/16 inches.

H03 is 3 7/16 x 4.5 inches.

Examples of two landscape orientation images measured by Hill.

H55 is 4.25 x 3.125 inches.

H57 is 4 5/16 x 2 3/16 inches.

Measurements of the landscape orientations create a problem for H55 and H77. Unless substantially trimmed, the two images would not fit on the same side of one page. However, in the Pennsylvania extra-illustrated copy, each of these images faces a different page.

Kate Lancaster's Plan

1) Facing Page 16

"We looked out of the window into pastures and pine woods"

After this conversation we looked industriously out of the window into the pastures and pine-woods.

H03

https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$3i

AN: 16

PC: 16

The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

Comments

In the 1893-4 edition, there is a drawing facing this text, entitled "The Stage Coach."

This photo may be of the same area as H71; both seem to show Bald Head in the background.

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2) Page 17

"Well as I know the meeting-house."

"Do you know the Brandon house? asked Kate. "Well as I do the meeting-house."

H05
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$5i
AN: 17
PC: 17
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

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3) Page 19.
"And then he got the chance to keep Deephaven light."

When he came home that time from whaling, he found I'd taken it so to heart that he said he'd never go off again, and then he got the chance to keep Deephaven Light. (18-19)

H07
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$7i
AN: 19
PC: 19
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo, but it may be trimmed on the left and right sides.

Comments
This is the Cape Neddick Light in York County Maine. The lighthouse also appears in the Woodbury illustrations for the 1893-4 edition, p. 193.

The Brandon House and the Lighthouse

In the 1893-4 edition, there are four drawings: "The Garret," "One Young Girl," "The Hall" and "In the Dory." "The Hall" shows the entrance hall of the house where Jewett was born and where she resided after 1887.

My Lady Brandon and the Widow Jim

4) Page 45
Our first caller .... a prim little old woman .... who wore a neat cap and front .... no bonnet .... and a little three cornered shawl with palm leaf figures over her shoulders"

The morning after we reached Deephaven we were busy up stairs, and there was a determined blow at the knocker of the front door. I went down to see who was there, and had the pleasure of receiving our first caller. She was a prim little old woman who looked pleased and expectant, who wore a neat cap and front, and whose eyes were as bright as black beads. She wore no bonnet, and had thrown a little three-cornered shawl, with palm-leaf figures, over her shoulders; and it was evident that she was a near neighbor.

H09
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$9i
AN: 45
PC: 45
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

Comments
The person in this photo, representing Mrs. Patton, resembles in age and build the woman with glasses depicted in the Woodbury drawing on p. 77 in the 1893 edition. Though this model bears some resemblance to Baker in photos I have seen, I do not see enough to be persuaded. Boleman says that Woodbury's drawing used Charles Woodbury's mother as a model.

Close examination shows that some details of the photo do not match the text. The door knocker is absent, and the shawl may not be three cornered with palm leaf figures. I am not able to determine whether her head covering would be considered a cap or a bonnet.

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5) Page 55
"The house was a little way down the road .... unpainted and gambrel roofed .... the old lilac bushes that clustered round it were as tall as the eaves"

I must tell you more of Mrs. Patton; of course it was not long before we returned her call, and we were much entertained; we always liked to see our friends in their own houses. Her house was a little way down the road, unpainted and gambrel-roofed, but so low that the old lilac-bushes which clustered round it were as tall as the eaves.

H11
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$11i
AN: 55
PC: 55
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

Comments
Janet Blyberg, in an e-mail exchange, says that this building is the Varrell House along the York River. She notes that the Old York Historical Society holds another Coleman photo of the same building, which remains standing in 2021.

6) Page 56

"She wore the same bonnet that she had when Kate was a child" ...."A well-preserved proper black straw bonnet and a useful lace veil to protect it from the weather"

She was always early at church, and she wore the same bonnet that she had when Kate was a child; it was such a well-preserved, proper black straw bonnet, with discreet bows of ribbon, and a useful lace veil to protect it from the weather. (56-7)

H13
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$13i
AN: 56
PC: 56
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

Comments
Mrs. Patton here seems to me to be portrayed by the same model as in H09, and again there is some resemblance to Baker in photos I have seen. Still, this person looks less like Baker than the woman in H09.

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7) Page 58

Mr. Patton's farm at East Parish

I asked her once if she had not always lived at Deephaven. Here and beyond East Parish," said she. "Mr. Patton, -- that was my husband, -- he owned a good farm there when I married him, but I come back here again after he died.

H15
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$15i
AN: 58
PC: 58
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

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8) Page 64

"The grass was long & tangled and most of the stones leaned one way or another"

I must tell you a little about the Deephaven burying-ground, for its interest was inexhaustible, and I do not know how much time we may have spent in reading the long epitaphs on the grave-stones and trying to puzzle out the inscriptions, which were often so old and worn that we could only trace a letter here and there. It was a neglected corner of the world, and there were straggling sumachs and acacias scattered about the enclosure, while a row of fine old elms marked the boundary of two sides. The grass was long and tangled, and most of the stones leaned one way or the other, and some had fallen flat.

H17
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$17i
AN: Face p. 64
PC: 64
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo, but it has been trimmed at the top and the bottom.

Comments
This image resembles the Woodbury drawing on p. 69 in the 1893-4 edition. There the passage on the burial ground appears on p. 74.

Deephaven Society

9) Page 68

"The ruined wharves are fast disappearing"

There are still two of the governor's warehouses left, but his ruined wharves are fast disappearing, and are almost deserted, except by small barefooted boys who sit on the edges to fish for sea-perch when the tide comes in (p. 69).

H19
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$19i
AN: to face 68 to face 69
PC: 68
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

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10) Page 69

And almost deserted except by small barefooted boys who sit on the edges to fish for perch

There are still two of the governor's warehouses left, but his ruined wharves are fast disappearing, and are almost deserted, except by small barefooted boys who sit on the edges to fish for sea-perch when the tide comes in.

H21
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$21i
AN: 69
PC: 69
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

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11) Page 70
"There were two schooners owned in town"

There were two schooners owned in town, and 'Bijah Mauley and Jo Sands owned a trawl. There were some schooners and a small brig slowly going to pieces by the wharves, and indeed all Deephaven looked more or less out of repair.

H23
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$23i
AN: to face p. 70
PC: 70
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

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12) Page 71
"All along shore ..... whaleboats which had been left to die a natural death"

All along shore one might see dories and wherries and whale-boats, which had been left to die a lingering death.

H25
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$25i
AN: to face p. 71
PC: 71
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

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13) Page 82
"The old Carew house"

Miss Honora Carew and Mr. Dick and their elder sister, Mrs. Dent, had a charmingly sedate and quiet home in the old Carew house.

H27
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$27i
AN: to face 82
PC: 82
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

Comments
Boleman quotes Jewett as suggesting to the Woodburys that the Emerson house in York was a good model for the Carew house. This photo probably is of the Emerson House, though it shows a side rather than the front, making it difficult to be certain. No image of Mrs. Carew's house appears in the Woodbury illustrations.

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14) Page 85
"Several other fine old houses in Deephaven"

There were several other fine old houses in Deephaven beside this and the Brandon house, though that was rather the most imposing. There were two or three which had not been kept in repair, and were deserted, and of course they were said to be haunted, and we were told of their ghosts, and why they walked, and when.

H01
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$1i
AN: to face 85
PC: 85
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

Comments
Nancy Wetzel identifies this as Coventry Hall at 34 Long Sands Road, York, ME. She notes the fenced in front yard, about which Jewett wrote in her essays "From a Mournful Villager" (1881) and "A Plea for Front Yards" (1888).
A Woodbury drawing of a similar house appears as the frontispiece for the 1893-4 edition.

The Captains

15) Page 89
Capt Lant brought out an old flag-bottomed chair ..... He looked like a well to do old English sparrow

The captain brought an old flag-bottomed chair from the woodhouse, and sat down facing Kate and me, with an air of certainty that he was going to hear something new and make some desirable new acquaintances, and also that he could tell something it would be worth our while to hear. He looked more and more like a well-to-do old English sparrow, and chippered faster and faster.

H29
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$29i
AN: 89
PC: 89
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

Comment
This text appears on p. 106 in the 1893-4 edition, where, facing page 108, there is a drawing of "The Old Captains."

Danny

16) Page 98

"Sometimes a schooner came to one of the wharves to load with hay"

Sometimes a schooner came to one of the wharves to load with hay or firewood; but Deephaven used to be a town of note, rich and busy, as its forsaken warehouses show.

H31

https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$31i
AN: 98
PC: 98

The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

Comments

In *A Noble and Dignified Stream* another version of this photograph appears on p. 181. In the possession of Historic New England, this image is labeled: "Emma Coleman, Sewall's Bridge, York River, ca. 1883-84. Photograph 6.75 in. x 9.25 in. Published in Sarah Orne Jewett, *Deephaven* (1885)."

The image that appears at the Houghton shows only the right portion of the image in *Dignified Stream*, thus changing the orientation from landscape to portrait. And, to repeat, this photo appears in no published edition of the novel.

Note also that the photo is dated to 1883-4. As textual evidence and the chronology strongly suggest that the collaboration began in 1886, this photo may not have been made during the collaboration, but later adapted for *Deephaven*.

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17) Page 101

"A solemn company of lobsterpots"

It was quiet enough that day, for not a single boat had come in, and there were no men to be seen along-shore. There was a solemn company of lobster-coops or cages which had been brought in to be mended. They always amused Kate. She said they seemed to her like droll old women telling each other secrets. These were scattered about in different attitudes, and looked more confidential than usual.

H33

https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$33i
AN: 101
PC: 101

The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

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18) Page 111

"I'd settle down ashore, have a snug little house & farm it"

I feel bad sometimes when I think of her, and I never went into Salem since without hoping that I should see her. I don't know but if I was a-going to begin my life over again, I'd settle down ashore and have a snug little house and farm it. But I guess I shall do better at fishing (111-12).

H35

https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$35i
AN: to face 111

Comment

This image does not appear in the Penn Copy.

Captain Sands

19) Page 118

"learning some charmingly intricate ones from Capt. Lant the stranded mariner who lived on a farm two miles or so inland"

"Kate," said I, "do you see what beauties these Turk's-head knots are?" We had been taking a course of first lessons in knots from Danny, and had followed by learning some charmingly intricate ones from Captain Lant, the stranded mariner who lived on a farm two miles or so inland. Kate came over to look at the Turk's-heads, which were at either end of the rope handles of a little dark-blue chest.

H37

https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$37i
AN: 118
PC: 118

The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo, except that it has been trimmed at the bottom.

Comments

This image shows one of the friends learning knots from Danny. I am not sure whether this woman is Helen or Kate.

Because I am reasonably sure that three or four different models were used to portray Helen and Kate, I attempt in these notes to keep track of what I see. This is the first image in the sequence to show one of the young women. The next is H41, where there are more notes on this topic.

In the 1893-4 edition, this text appears on pp. 142-4. Facing 142 is a drawing of Captain Sands.

The Circus at Denby

In the 1893-4 edition there are four drawings: "Going to the Circus," showing the family in the wagon on a country road; "Posters on 'Bijah Mauley's Barn"; "My sakes alive, ain't he big!" showing a crowd admiring the circus elephant; and "The Lecture Notice," regarding the YMCA talk.

Cunner-Fishing

21) Page 149

We used to eat mushrooms which grew in the suburbs of the town in wild luxuriance

I am afraid we were looked upon as being in danger of becoming epicures, which we certainly are not, and we undoubtedly roused a great deal of interest because we used to eat mushrooms, which grew in the suburbs of the town in wild luxuriance (149-50).

H39
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$39i
AN: 149
PC: 149

The PC photo is adapted from the Houghton photo; it is trimmed at the top and on the right, removing all of the mushroom furthest to the right.

---

21) Page 163

"Kate and I cracked our clams on the gunwale of the boat"

Kate and I cracked our clams on the gunwale of the boat, and cut them into nice little bits for bait with a piece of the shell, and by the time the captain had thrown out the killick we were ready to begin, and found the fishing much more exciting than it had been at the wharf.

H41
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$41i
AN: 163
PC: 163

The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

Comments

This is the first image in the sequence to include both Helen and Kate. Previously, H37 showed just one of the friends.

The woman on the left almost certainly is the same model in the same clothing as in H37.

The face of the woman on the right is not visible, but she wears a distinguishing cap, and a dark neck scarf.

The next image of the friends is H47.

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22) Page 164

"Tide nearly out ... sea smooth & the low waves broke lazily .... Black rock looked large enough to be called an island"

It was growing cloudy, and was much cooler, -- the perfection of a day for fishing, -- and we sat there diligently pulling in cunners, and talking a little once in a while. The tide was nearly out, and Black Rock looked almost large enough to be called an island.

H43
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$43i
AN: to face 164
PC: 164 image on the right page

The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo, but it has been turned so that the top is toward the outside of the page. It may be trimmed on the left side as well.

---

23) Page 167

"Our house sets high & she watches the sky"

Our house sets high, and she watches the sky and is al'ays a worrying when I go out fishing for fear something's going to happen to me, 'specially sence I've got to be along in years."

H45
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$45i
AN: 167
PC: 167

The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

Comments

This photo, like the last one in the series (H89) represents Mrs. Captain Sands. Libby Bischof, in her slide lecture, persuasively compares this model with a photo of Coleman to assert that Coleman herself was the model. This almost certainly means that Coleman did not "snap" this photo; another person would have to operate the shutter. Noticing this underlines the

complexity of the late 19th-century photo process, for the person operating the shutter actually may contribute little to the overall process.

---

24) Page 168

After dinner Kate & I went for a walk through some pine woods"

After dinner Kate and I went for a walk through some pine woods which were beautiful after the rain; the mosses and lichens which had been dried up were all freshened and blooming out in the dampness.

H47

https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$47i

AN: 168

PC: 168

The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

Comments

This is the 2nd image in the sequence to show both friends; H37 showed just one of them.

As both are facing away from the camera, the models cannot be identified with certainty. Both are in dark dresses. The woman on the right appears to be wearing the same cap as the woman on the right in H41, but she may be wearing a more elaborate dress, not very appropriate for fishing in a boat. The woman on the left is wearing completely different clothing than the woman in the light dress in H31.

In *Archives of Desire* (2015), J. Samaine Lockwood analyzes this image: "... in the Emma Lewis Coleman photographs ..., we have a visual representation of how Kate and Helen's intimacy relies on their mobility, their exploration of the natural world, and their forging of cross-generational relationships." She continues:

> The first ... to depict Kate and Helen features their physical intimacy as it is framed by the natural world of New England.... Walking together toward the sun, Kate's arm around Helen's waist, the girls cast shadows behind them just as they have left the history of unmarried women's violent immobilization in the dismal shadows of Miss Brandon's best chamber. Far afield from domestic confinement, the two move more deeply into the New England woods, their bodies penetrating forward from the bushes of the foreground toward the thicker growth of firs that lay ahead. Giving loose visual form to female genitalia, this photograph depicts the young women's love for one another as both articulated in the natural world and naturalized by way of the landscape's fecundity. (p. 72)

I would quibble a little and add to Lockwood's observations, but I don't believe these differences would undermine her analysis. To me it seems clear that the sun is as much to their right rather as before them. I wonder how to distinguish Kate from Helen (see H49 Commentary), and I note their different headwear, that the person identified as Kate wears a neck scarf, and the nature of their path, which appears to be maintained as a cart track. Each may be carrying something, the woman on the left some foliage, on the right perhaps the basket with flowers that appears in H49.

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25) Page 169

"We wandered about for an hour or two to find some ferns ..... and home late in the afternoon"

The smell of the wet pitch-pines was unusually sweet, and we wandered about for an hour or two there, to find some ferns we wanted, and then walked over toward East Parish, and home by the long beach late in the afternoon (168).

H49

https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$49i

AN: 169

PC: 169

The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

Comments

This is the 3rd image in the sequence to show both friends; H37 showed just one of them. Almost certainly, these are the same models as in H47, as they wear the same clothing, particularly their headwear. The woman on the right resembles the woman on the right in H41, with the same hat and a similar face, though this comparison is difficult. However, the woman on the left seems to me not to closely resemble the woman who wears a lighter dress in H41.

In *Archives of Desire* (2015), Lockwood analyzes this image:

> The photograph meant for the facing page ... represents Kate and Helen on the way back from their sojourn in the woods [H47]. Here the girls face the viewer, and Helen leans down to gather the treasures that place her and Kate's own queer and present mobility into the decorative discourses of the west

parlor: the flowers and ferns that Kate holds in her basket. Kate's hands, meanwhile, come together in a distinct "V," directing our gaze to her own genital area, which is linked to the blooming flowers and fern tendrils. The circuit from women's eroticized body parts, including Kate's hands, to flowers to fir trees is complete. Helen's act of picking flowers and the presence of collected flora throughout the novel, both the bouquets of the west parlor and the cattails that Kate keeps in her bedroom back in Boston as a symbol of their summer, reinforce these meanings. Time's passage is marked ... in the form of the footprints the girls made in the muddy road on their way into the woods, footprints that render historical their journey together. Alongside these women whose bodies are turned toward us are physical reminders of the prior image of them walking away from us, Kate's arm around Helen's waist. Their past intimacy, the history of their bodies in this place, is written on the land (in the mud as footprints) and into the archive (by way of the photo). Placed on facing pages, these two photographs encourage us to wonder about what intimate acts may have occurred in the span of time and space that remains unrepresented in the images but that is suggested by the language of distention Helen uses in the text to describe their journeys: "We often made long expeditions . . . sometimes being gone all day, and sometimes taking a long afternoon stroll." (pp. 72-6)

As with Lockwood's examination of H47, I would quibble with some of her details. The photos do not face each other in the 1907 copy. While footprints are visible, some appear to be going away and others to be coming toward the front of the image. Further, it seems unclear that these footprints belong to these women, as they look rather large and randomly arranged. This image and, especially, H53 show that Coleman (perhaps with the aid of Jewett) was quite capable of organizing her content down to the details of footprints, but I am uncertain that we can see that particular detail here.

Finally, distinguishing Helen from Kate seems problematic to me in all of the photos where both appear. I am not able to make clear distinctions from one photo to the next, perhaps in part because of my confusion about the number of models who portray them. I will leave the resolution of this problem to more skilled viewers.

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26) Page 177

Uncle Tobias lived on the ridge

Gran'ther lived to be old, and there was ten or a dozen years after his wife died that he lived year and year about with Uncle Tobias's folks and our folks. Uncle Tobias lived over on the Ridge.

H51

https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$51i

AN: 177

PC: 177

The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

Comment

Similar is the drawing on p. 1, the beginning of the Preface, in the 1893-4 edition.

Mrs. Bonny

27) Page 188

We used to ask for a drink of water

We had a fashion of calling at the farm-houses, and by the end of the season we knew as many people as if we had lived in Deephaven all our days. We used to ask for a drink of water; this was our unfailing introduction, and afterward there were many interesting subjects which one could introduce, and we could always give the latest news at the shore.

H53

https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$53i

AN: 188

PC: 188

The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

Comments

This is the fourth image in the sequence to depict both friends; H37 showed just one of them. To me, they seem clearly to be the same models as in H49. Both woman now have different hats from the previous images of them, and there may be other differences in their dress, including neck scarves and possibly different dresses. To me it seems fairly obvious that the woman in the back has appeared in all four of the images so far that include both women. And it seems equally obvious that the woman with the cup is not the same model as appeared in H37 learning knots and in H41 in the boat. I should also point out that in Lockwood's analysis below, I believe she has

reversed the identities of the models. The woman she identifies as Helen, picking plants in H49, becomes in this photo, Kate, the drinking woman.

Of the photos in this collection, this may show the most evidence of careful staging and composition. It is no surprise that Lockwood gives it extensive attention. Central to the feeling that the image was carefully composed is the pole that divides the figures and space diagonally.

In an exchange of e-mails, Nancy Wetzel, retired from Historic New England, suggested that the pole almost certainly belongs to a well-sweep. See for example the Woodbury illustration at the opening of "My Lady Brandon and the Widow Jim" in the 1893-4 edition, p. 46. According to Wikipedia, a well serviceable by a sweep normally would be no deeper than 6 meters, about 20 feet. A lever pole would rest and pivot on a fulcrum. When at rest, the weighted shorter end of the lever would be down, and at the end of the longer side would hang a rope with a pail at the end. Pulling down the rope would lower the pail into the well, and the counter-balancing weight would ease lifting the filled pail from the well. In the photo, these functional features of the sweep are absent. However, another Coleman photo included in the Libby Bischof slide lecture sheds light on this image.

Bischof shows a photo from the Museums of Old York, "Going to the well, the old Francis Reynes House, York." In this photo is a similar well, with a pole projecting out at about the same angle. On the left are visible the fulcrum and lever pole. This suggests that rather than lowering and raising the pail with a rope, this arrangement used another pole to which a bucket was attached, to be lowered and raised. In the well in this H53 photo, the pail may be permanently attached, so after lifting, it could be dumped into the trough between the two women in front, to pour into another receptacle, such as the pail in the local woman's hand.

This attention to the mechanics of the image is important because it calls attention to choices the collaborators made. In *Archives of Desire* (2015), Lockwood observes:

> ... [It] depicts Kate about to drink water that the girls have routinely requested as part of their “unfailing introduction” to new people. In this photograph, more clearly than in the passage from the novel itself, we have a proposed connection between the collection of symbolic flowers long rooted in the soils of New England and the expansion of social relations with older people who are the perennial blossoming of New England families that go back to colonial times. Both form part of a dynamic queer practice in the present. When we look back to early in *Deephaven*, to the moment when Helen explains to readers why she loves Kate and how she hopes we, too, will love her, we see how empathy engenders her social mobility: Kate knows “with surest instinct how to meet them [local people] on their own ground. It is the girl’s being so genuinely sympathetic and interested which makes every one ready to talk to her and be friends with her; just as the sunshine makes it easy for flowers to grow which the chilly winds hinder.” Kate ... leans in to make contact with an old New England woman figured as one of many flowers she is said to warm. Barriers to this contact with an elderly New Englander, however, are double: there is a fence between the girls and the older woman and a long pole set at a vertical slant divides them visually. Difference is coded, too, in the old woman’s light shirt contrasting the girls’ dark dresses. Yet the figures come together visually in the repeating images of vessels: the water bucket and water cup ... (pp. 76).

Lockwood's further analysis emphasizes how suggestions of erotic affection in the image work to connect the figures across potential divisions: age and youth, rural and urban, working and leisure class. In further support of this notion, I would note that to me the fence appears to be behind the three women, thus locating the potential new friends inside the local woman's yard. That the woman has welcomed them in hints at spiritual as well as erotic potential in this new relationship.

Wetzel also notes how the diagonal made by the pole is repeated by the body of the woman with the mug. Another repetition of the diagonal is visible in the three material objects in their hands: the drinker's hat, giver's pail, and the shared mug between them, containing the gift. The older woman's intense gaze and leaning forward to speak helps to form the triangular space made by the three figures, which is repeated in the trees and extended by the pole into the sky and beyond the frame. These triangles give compositional unity to the image, while suggesting, in their ascending apexes, the spiritual potential of the intimacy being established. The local woman looks and speaks intently, one younger woman drinks, the other looks on attentively, and both younger women listen. In this context, the giving and

receiving of water and words may become a kind of communion that unites the human and the divine, as in John 4:14: "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Taken as a whole, the image may illustrate one of Jewett's typical themes, as expressed in the opening of *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, the beginning with "love at first sight" of what may become a life-long affair of true friendship. The pole extending past the frame may suggest the hoped-for transcendent mountain-top moments of transfiguring intimacy that are the ultimate fruition in mortal life of true friendship, as Jewett describes it in her 3 September c. 1897 letter to Sara Norton:

> There is something transfiguring in the best of friendship. One remembers the story of the transfiguration in the New Testament, and sees over and over in life what the great shining hours can do, and how one goes down from the mountain where they are, into the fret of everyday life again, but strong in remembrance.

Probably the local woman is modeled by Charlotte Alice Baker. One may compare 1880s photograph of Baker at American Centuries

(http://americancenturies.mass.edu/collection/itempage.jsp?itemid=1386)

as well as the photo at Find a Grave. Lockwood's identification of the drinking woman as Kate seems speculative, for she offers no rationale. Perhaps she responds to the apparent engagement between the giver and receiver of the cup, which supports the picture in the text passage of Kate as the initiator and Helen as the observer.

Lockwood focuses her attention on four *Deephaven* photos depicting the relationship between Helen and Kate: H47, H49, H53, and H87. The first three of these appear close together near the center of the photo collection. To make H53 almost certainly required the contributions of all the collaborators. Baker needed appropriate clothing, two other models were necessary, the well was located and its owner consulted, and all gathered when the weather conditions were right. Probably various poses and arrangements were considered, and there may have been more than one photo. It seems likely that Coleman's eye for composition, influenced by Lane, was as essential as Jewett's sense of what would enrich her book. All three may have helped to secure helpful local acquaintances.

Further, the photo implies a somewhat complex narrative. The two friends must have encountered the local woman in her garden or by knocking on her door. She must have gone into her kitchen for the mug, and probably she has drawn fresh water from the well and filled the pail she holds. By the time she offers the drink, a good deal of conversation must already have passed, hence the intensity of her gaze at the drinker.

In *Deephaven*, there is no actual scene in which a specific local woman gives water to strolling strangers. The image supposedly illustrates what happened often, as described in the chapter entitled "Mrs. Bonny." Dramatizing a single instance in this way may enrich the meaning of the friends' typical efforts to make new acquaintances.

Later in "Mrs. Bonny" is an actual attempt at sharing water, when Kate asks Mrs. Bonny for a tumbler so she may fetch a drink from the nearby spring. This provokes a comic scene in which Mrs. Bonny mines a disorderly cupboard for a dirty tumbler, the sight of which, by itself, relieves the women's thirst. This photograph, then, contrasts vividly with the incident of Mrs. Bonny, whose conversation is entertaining, but not likely to lead to the sort of intimacy pointing toward deeper friendship implicit in H53. As Lockwood repeatedly intimates, the photos of the friends together add to the novel by drawing out potential meanings in their interactions. Adam Sonstegard, in "'Bedtime' for a Boston Marriage: Sarah Orne Jewett's Illustrated *Deephaven,*" makes a similar case for a Woodbury drawing that Jewett suggested, "Bedtime" (p. 224), which shows the friends on the stairs of the Brandon House, going to bed after 1 a.m.

28-9) Page 189 -- The transcription of the photos list suggests that both photos were to be on the same page.

East Point (Eastern Pt. York)"
Short Sands (York

I think there were no points of interest in that region which we did not visit with conscientious faithfulness. There were cliffs and pebble-beaches, the long sands and the short sands; there were Black Rock and Roaring Rock, High Point and East Point, and Spouting Rock; we went to see where a ship had been driven ashore in the night, all hands being lost and not

a piece of her left larger than an axe-handle; we visited the spot where a ship had come ashore in the fog, and had been left high and dry on the edge of the marsh when the tide went out; we saw where the brig Methuselah had been wrecked, and the shore had been golden with her cargo of lemons and oranges, which one might carry away by the wherryful (189-90).

H55
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$55i
AN: 189
Zoe Hill measures the image dimensions on this page: 4.25 x 3.125.
PC: 100, image on the right page.
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo, but it has been turned so that the top is toward the outside of the page, and it has been trimmed on the left side.

H57
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$57i
AN: 189.
PC: 21, image on the left page.
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo, but the bottom is toward the outside of the page.

Comments

East point and Short Sands both are actual locations in the village of York.

To fit both images on the same page leaving some white space, each would need trimming in both dimensions. I estimate the dimensions of this image: 4.25 x 2.8. However, in the Penn Copy, neither of these images appears facing p. 189; instead as indicated above, each has been placed facing a page of its own.

Page 21 of the Penn Copy includes this relevant text: "Later in the evening we went down to the shore, which was not very far away; the fresh sea-air was welcome after the dusty day, and it seemed to quiet and pleasant in Deephaven." Similar is the Woodbury drawing on the first Contents page.

Page 100 of the Penn Copy describes visits to the shore, with a long paragraph on how fishermen view the sea: "They have an awe of the sea and of its mysteries, and of what it hides away from us."

It seems clear from the number of differences between the Houghton collection and the 1907 copy that two different creative acts produced these two artifacts. The differences include omitting H35 and H85, altering the placement of H55 and H57, and trimming a number of images. Further, the differences may indicate that the list predates the extra-illustrated copy. When the list was made, the author believed that an extra-illustrated copy could be made by following the written instructions, but when Coleman turned to making the extra-illustrated copy, she found that this would not work perfectly. While this idea is plausible, other possibilities cannot easily be ruled out; perhaps different people made the list and the copy, or perhaps Coleman decided after making the copy that it would be better to place these two images on the same page and to include H35 and H85. Trimming, when necessary, would require beginning with whole prints.

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30) Page 190
"The land was uneven and full of ledges, and the people worked hard for their living"

Inland there were not many noted localities, but we used to enjoy the woods, and our explorations among the farms, immensely. To the westward the land was better and the people well-to-do; but we went oftenest toward the hills and among the poorer people. The land was uneven and full of ledges, and the people worked hard for their living, at most laying aside only a few dollars each year.

H59
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$59i
AN: 190
PC: 190
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

Comment
This photo resembles the drawing at the opening of the preface to the 1893-4 Woodbury edition, p. 1.

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31) Page 203
"She was a great smoker"

There was something so wild and unconventional about Mrs. Bonny that it was like taking an afternoon walk with a good-natured Indian. We used to carry her offerings of tobacco, for she was a great smoker, and advised us to try it, if ever we should be troubled with nerves, or "narves," as she pronounced the name of that affliction.

H61
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$61i

AN: 203
PC: 203
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

Comments
This woman at least slightly resembles Susan Minot Lane, but when I compare the few images of Lane that I have seen, I am not persuaded that she was the model.

Coleman used another photo of the same person and location as an illustration for George Dow's *Everyday Life in the Massachusetts Bay Colony* (1935): plate 66 "A Back Door Scene."

In Shadow

32) Page 204
"We had heard of the coast road"

He had the care of the Brandon property, and had some business at that time connected with a large tract of pasture-land perhaps ten miles from town. We had heard of the coast-road which led to it, how rocky and how rough and wild it was, and when Kate heard by chance that Mr. Dockum meant to go that way, she asked if we might go with him.

H63
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$63i
AN: to face 204
PC: 204
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

Comment
A similar image appears in the 1893-4 *Deephaven*, on page 244, which also contains the above text.

Janet Blyberg has noticed the similarity between this photo and H71. The two may show the same tree from different sides. To the Old York Historical Society print of H71, Coleman gave the title: "Shore Road to Ogunquit, Approaching Bald Head, 1880s."

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33) Page 205
"The highest rock of all"

The house was close by the water by a narrow cove, around which the rocks were low, but farther down the shore the land rose more and more, and at last we stood at the edge of the highest rocks of all and looked far down at the sea, dashing its white spray high over the ledges that quiet day.

H65
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$65i
AN: 205
PC: 205
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

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34) Page 208
"Sometimes we crossed pebbly beaches"

Sometimes we crossed pebble beaches, and then went farther inland, through woods and up and down steep little hills; over shaky bridges which crossed narrow salt creeks in the marsh-lands (p. 209).

H67
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$67i
AN: 208
PC: 208
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

Comment
A similar image appears in the 1893-4 *Deephaven*, on page 249, which also contains the above text.

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35) Page 209
Over shaky bridges

Sometimes we crossed pebble beaches, and then went farther inland, through woods and up and down steep little hills; over shaky bridges which crossed narrow salt creeks in the marsh-lands.

H69
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$69i
AN: to face 209
PC: 209
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

Comment
A similar image appears in the 1893-4 edition at the beginning of "Miss Chauncey" on p. 267.

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36) Page 214
To pitch pine trees we had seen before.

It was a beautiful morning, and we walked slowly along the shore to the high rocks and the pitch-pine trees which we had seen before; the

air was deliciously fresh, and one could take long deep breaths of it.

H71
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$71i
AN: face p. [*deletion*] 214 Houghton Library
PC: 214
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

Comments
Janet Blyberg, in an e-mail exchange, has shared a print of this photograph held by the Old York Historical Society, entitled by Coleman: "Shore Road to Ogunquit, Approaching Bald Head, 1880s." That print shows that the print was trimmed significantly on all four sides to create the image held by the Houghton.
A comparison of this photo with H03 and H63 suggests that they are of the same area, but from different points of view. Though the trees are different, H03 and H71 seem to show Bald Head in the background.

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37) Page 218
The old boat with its killick and painter stretched ashore

We seated ourselves on a rock near the water; just beside us was the old boat, with its killick and painter stretched ashore, where its owner had left it.

H73
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$73i
AN: 218
PC: 218
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

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38) Page 221
At a little distance from the land the waves were leaping high & breaking in white foam over the isolated ledges

We could hear the dull sound of the sea, and at a little distance from the land the waves were leaping high, and breaking in white foam over the isolated ledges (220-1).

H75
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$75i
AN: 221
PC: 221, image on the left page.
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo, but it is turned with the bottom toward the outside of the page.

Comment
A very similar image appears in the 1893-4 edition at the beginning of "Last Days in Deephaven," p. 288. The number of images of the shore included in this photo collection may reflect Coleman's pleasure in being able to use recent technology to freeze motion in her photography.

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39) Page 222
It is not likely that anyone else will ever go there to live

The door fitted loosely, and the man gave it a vindictive shake, as if he thought that the poor house had somehow been to blame, and that after a long desperate struggle for life under its roof and among the stony fields the family must go away defeated. It is not likely that any one else will ever go to live there.

H77
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$77i
AN: 222
PC: 222
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

Miss Chauncey

40) Page 224
There was a church which we had been told was the oldest in the region

Every house seemed to have a lane of its own, and all faced different ways except two fish-houses, which stood amiably side by side. There was a church, which we had been told was the oldest in the region. Through the windows we saw the high pulpit and sounding-board, and finally found the keys at a house near by; so we went in and looked around at our leisure (225).

H79
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$79i
AN: 224 [corrected from 225] Kittery Point meeting house
PC: 224
The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.
This probably is the actual Kittery Point First

Congregational Church though the steeple is not the same in current photos.

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41) Page 225

Mifs Chauncy's house & fence

The front entrance was a fine specimen of old-fashioned workmanship, with its columns and carvings, and the fence had been a grand affair in its day, though now it could scarcely stand alone.

H81

https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$81i

AN: p. 225

PC: 225

The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo. This includes the rounded trimming of the top corners.

Janet Blyberg of Old York Historical Society says that this is the Lady Pepperell House in Kittery Point. ME. She also notes that the photo probably was taken from the steeple of the First Congregational Church across the street.

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42) Page 237

The distant steeples of Riverport

She had no idea of the poverty of her surroundings when she paced back and forth, with stately steps, on the ruined terraces of her garden; the ranks of lilies and the conserve-roses were still in bloom for her, and the box-borders were as trimly kept as ever; and when she pointed out to us the distant steeples of Riverport, it was plain to see that it was still the Riverport of her girlhood.

H83

https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$83i

AN: 237

PC: 237

The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo. The view, almost certainly, is of Portsmouth, NH.

Last Days in Deephaven

43) Page 242

The great breakers come plunging in against the rocks

At one time there was a magnificent storm, and we went every day along the shore in the wind and rain for a mile or two to see the furious great breakers come plunging in against the rocks (241-2).

H85

https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$85i

AN: 242

Comments

This image does not appear in the Penn Copy. A similar image appears in the 1893-4 *Deephaven*, on page 288; the above text appears opposite on p. 289.

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44) Page 250

"Cherished volumes of poetry .... used to read them aloud to each other when we sat on our favorite corners of the rock"

And we used to read the Spectator, and many old-fashioned stories and essays and sermons, with much more pleasure because they had such quaint old brown leather bindings. You will not doubt that we had some cherished volumes of poetry, or that we used to read them aloud to each other when we sat in our favorite corner of the rocks at the shore, or were in the pine woods of an afternoon.

H87

https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$87i

AN: 250

PC: 250

The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

Comments

This is the fifth and final photo in the sequence to include both friends; H37 depicted just one. It seems clear that the woman on the left, who wears the same hat as she did in H53 at the well, is the one model who has appeared in all five photos of the pair. The reading woman, however, is a puzzle. It is possible that she is the woman who appeared in the lighter colored dress in H37 learning knots and H41 in the boat, but to my eye, the resemblance is slight. She may be a new model.

In *Archives of Desire* (2015), J. Samaine Lockwood analyzes this image:

> As the final Coleman photograph of the hoped-for and never-realized edition of *Deephaven* suggests, the intimacy cultivated during that summer between Kate and Helen depends not on settling into a dyadic same-sex household but on ongoing social and physical movement that engages history just as it looks forward to the future, recognizing

> both as intertwined .... Helen gazes out to sea across the Atlantic, and Kate looks down to the apparently limitless world of imaginative literature: traveling and writing are the two ways Jewett imagines a mobile intimate practice that is itself historical and in history, ever-expanding in its embrace. (p. 80)

Again, I have trouble with Lockwood's identification of the women, noting that Kate in this photo seems to be portrayed by the model she identified as Helen in H53. I do not know how to distinguish the friends in any of their photos together. Lockwood's association of Helen with reading and Kate with gazing out to sea is suggestive, but I wonder whether "Kate" is looking at the book as well as beyond it, and I also wonder about her arm intertwining with "Helen's," with her elbow in the lap.

While this is the final photo of the pair of women planned for inclusion in *Deephaven*, it is the penultimate photo in the entire series. Reading between her lines, I wonder if Lockwood shares my sense that this would have been the final image in the series were Jewett making the choices, whereas the actual final image turns out to be probably a self-portrait of Coleman.

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45) Page 253

Our friends ... were looking out from door and window to see us go by

The morning we came away our friends were all looking out from door or window to see us go by, and after we had passed the last house and there was no need to smile any longer, we were very dismal.

H89
https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$89i
AN: 253
PC: 250

The PC photo appears identical with the Houghton photo.

Comments

As noted above for H45, this photo represents Mrs. Captain Sands. Libby Bischof, in her slide lecture, persuasively compares this model with a photo of Coleman to assert that Coleman herself was the model.

It is suggestive that Coleman's final photo illustration may present herself as the model, bidding farewell to the two young friends who have enlivened the village of Deephaven during their summer stay. It seems poignant as the ending part of a birthday gift to her closest friend at a time when they must both have known Baker would not live many more years.

One may reflect further that the two images of Coleman appear at almost precisely the middle and the end of the series and that both express loss. In H45, Mrs. Captain Sands looks out to sea, concerned about the welfare of her husband, hoping he is seeking the safety of home in threatening weather. The textual passage for H45 reads, in part, "she watches the sky and is al'ays a worrying when I go out fishing for fear something's going to happen to me, 'specially sence I've got to be along in years." Both images point to the inevitable partings that belong to mortality.

Thinking in this way about the images underlines another fact about the entire set of *Deephaven* photos that one must keep in mind. At this time, the dates of the photographs are not known. While there seems to be ample common sense evidence that some of these 45 photos were made during 1886, there is no "proof" that all were made at that time. Some of them could have been made as late as 1907, shortly before the extra-illustrated copy is dated. If any were made so much later than the 1880s, the two in which Coleman may be the model would be strong candidates.

An Envelope

https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$106i

This manila envelope is severely worn. It has a 5 cent stamp and is not dated.
Penned near the top center: "Photographs to illustrate Deephaven". The handwriting has not been identified, but it is possible the hand is Jewett's.

Centered is a glued-on printed express label: From Houghton Mifflin Company, Publishers, 4 Park Street, Boston. The word "Express" bottom right of the label seems to have been deleted with typed x's.

The label is addressed to: Miss Mary R. Jewett, South Berwick, Maine.

The relation of this envelope to the Coleman photographs for *Deephaven* is not certain. From 1883 through 1917, the U. S. postal rate for letters and packages was $0.02 / ounce. Almost certainly 45 photos would weigh too much to be mailed for 5 cents.

Still, it appears it may have contained the 45 photos in this part of the Houghton collection along with the instructions list about their placement, but I have only the image of the envelope to work from, and it seems the photos would be a tight fit.

If, somehow, the photos did fit into and were mailed in this envelope, the penned note also suggests that they were mailed from Houghton Mifflin to Sarah Orne Jewett's sister, Mary Rice Jewett. This would suggest the mailing took place after Sarah Jewett's death in 1909, but there may have been some other reason for this mailing to Mary Jewett. Further, though the photos may have been stored here, that does not prove that they were mailed to Mary Jewett in this envelope.

In short, while the envelope is suggestive, it proves very little.

Conclusion

Even though there is so much more one would like to know about the collaboration of Lane, Baker, Jewett and Coleman that led to one known extra-illustrated copy of *Deephaven* in 1907, I believe that in this document, I have helped to sort fact from probable fiction and to produce as accurate an account as can be had at this time.

Soon after Jewett published *Deephaven* in 1877, Baker read it and opened a conversation with Jewett that suggests mutual discovery. This friendship deepened enough that a decade later, in the summer 1886, Jewett found herself joining Baker and Coleman on their historical and artistic explorations of York County, ME. Whether Lane also participated in 1886 is not known. At some unknown point, the collaborators had conceived the idea of making photographic illustrations for *Deephaven*. By that time, Jewett was a firmly established author, having published several collections of short works and two more novels, and she then was at work on her own ambitious history, *The Story of the Normans*, ambitious because, as she was well aware, she was ill prepared to write such a book. Jewett also was clearly engaged with local history, as shown in a number of her publications, notably the poem for young readers, "York Garrison: 1640," published in June 1886.

Jewett's one known letter to Coleman shows that her work with Coleman almost certainly began in 1886 and may have extended to the summer of 1887, though evidence of the second summer's work is lacking. That Jewett had seen few of Coleman's photos in December of 1886 indicates that they were not yet well acquainted. Coleman's memory of the collaboration is indefinite about the dates, though she associates it with a more general exploration of York County she participated in with Baker and Lane in the 1880s. That separate collaboration she describes as artistic and documentary. The artistic part, associated with Lane, involved discovering and then depicting "some picture that held us." The documentary part, associated with Baker as historian, involved making "many valuable records of house and field industries." Presumably, these two purposes blended at times, leading to photos that offer valuable records while also "holding" viewers.

When Jewett joined in, the purpose of their work shifted to illustrating her "charming" book under Jewett's direction. It seems likely that this project sometimes overlapped with the other two, for some of the photographs in the Houghton collection document local buildings and people. Indeed, it is not yet clear that all of the photos connected with *Deephaven* were made specifically for the project. Coleman may have taken some without Jewett's direction that eventually made their way into the group selected as illustrations, for example "Sewall's Bridge."

Twelve of the 45 photos almost certainly were "directed" and made for the book, those that depict characters, usually enacting events. However, at least one of these, Mrs. Bonny having a smoke (H61) was later the subject in another book, George Dow's *Everyday Life in the Massachusetts Bay Colony* (1935): plate 66 "A Back Door Scene." Two repeated assertions about these photos lack primary source support: that Baker (and perhaps Lane) "played" some of these characters and that the models wore "period" costume. While it is the case that some of the characters resemble Baker, only the photo of the women at the well (H53) includes a person who looks enough like Baker to persuade me. The "period costume" idea seems meaningless, since the figures appear to be wearing contemporary dress, and they are illustrating a novel with a contemporary setting. To be in costume at all, they would need to be dressed in clothing different from what they would normally wear. This may apply to images of the two friends, who do not wear the clothing described in the novel, and to the local woman

at the well, who -- if she is portrayed by Baker -- is wearing rural housework clothing that Baker herself may not have worn habitually.

While it would seem obvious that the friends would undertake such an illustration project only if Jewett hoped to publish a new edition of *Deephaven* using the illustrations, there is no primary evidence of this intention. No such edition was published. This does not disprove such an intention however. Jewett may have advocated for this with her publisher, but only in early 1893 is there evidence that Houghton Mifflin showed any interest. Then the project proceeded rather quickly. Jewett may have asked Coleman to help with including her photos, but there is no evidence of this. Jewett may have asked Sarah Wyman Whitman to design the cover and make illustrations. If she did, it appears Whitman was unable to take on the whole project. In any case, Jewett turned to her long-time friends, Marcia and Charles Woodbury, who began their work, again to some degree under Jewett's direction, in the spring of 1893.

This sequence of events does not indicate that Jewett made a decision against using the Coleman photographs. It seems more likely that Coleman was not able early in 1893 to return to the work she had begun earlier. Susan Lane died of pneumonia in February 1893. At this time, I do not know the circumstances of her death, though she seems to have had precarious health for much of her life. Surely this event would have been a barrier to Coleman joining the publication project at that time. Further, she and Baker and Lane had been very busy during 1892 completing a major historic preservation project in Deerfield, MA.

Two decades after making the 1886 photos and 14 years after the 1893 new illustrated edition of *Deephaven*, Coleman undertook what almost certainly was a labor of love, creating an actual extra-illustrated copy of *Deephaven*. Constructing this copy was labor intensive. As Regan Kladstrup notes, after making and printing the photos, Coleman then disassembled an 1885 reprint, added new leaves, rebound the book, trimmed some of the prints to fit, and finally glued each carefully in place. On an added leaf at the front of the book, either Coleman or Baker wrote: "C. Alice Baker from Emma, April 4 -- 1907." By this means, Coleman created what may have been a birthday gift to her fellow historian, colleague, collaborator and life partner, 2 years before Baker's death at 74.

When I began this project, I believed that the account of the collaboration in Blanchard and her sources must represent a major event in the lives of four significant American women, a multi-year cooperative effort in 1883-1886 with a substantial if unpublished result. Examining the available primary sources has diminished its significance for them without necessarily reducing its interest for readers and scholars. The project appears not to have been finished, there being no photos of South Berwick. If it really was intended to eventuate in an illustrated publication, this never happened. An opportunity to produce an illustrated edition came along in 1893, but there is no evidence that the photos were considered for this book, even though it appears that the photos may have influenced Jewett's thinking about the Woodbury drawings in the new edition of *Deephaven*. Though Jewett certainly participated, at least during the summer of 1886, she never mentions this project again in her known correspondence after that year. While Coleman gives the collaboration a sentence in her unpublished biography of Baker, she says nothing about what she did with the photos or about making any more after the work along shore in York.

The collaboration seems to have stalled after 1886, extending over one summer, rather than over four years. Participation also seems less extensive than previously believed. Lane may have participated little or not at all in the production of the photos, as she was abroad for at least part of the summer of 1886. Baker *may* appear in a few of the photos, though I remain skeptical. Though not certain of this, I am willing to believe she is the local woman among the women at the well (H53). Coleman says Jewett directed the project when they were together, and it seems clear that she chose at least some of the landscape photo sites. It is even more likely that she participated in making the set of photos Lockwood focuses on, and the others that show scenes from the novel with Helen and Kate and other characters. I suspect that Coleman made at least some of the landscape photos on her own, without consulting Jewett, and that she may have made the two self-portraits -- identified by Bischoff -- especially for the extra-illustrated copy she gave to Baker. In this account, Coleman's role after 1886, seems more important than Jewett's.

My view of the collaboration is highly speculative, mostly inferred from hints and scraps. Having considered all I've been able to examine, I suspect that after the summer of 1886, the collaboration soon ended, and that the Houghton *Deephaven* collection and the extra-

illustrated copy both were mainly Coleman's work. If only we knew which photos Coleman sent Jewett in December 1886! and when the Houghton collection came into the Jewett family's hands! Those are only a few of the many gaps in this story that one might hope to fill someday.

One can hope that more correspondence will appear, perhaps more first-person description. It seems odd, for example, that Jewett wrote to none of her friends about a project that must have engaged her deeply, if briefly, and that may have inspired her to keep after Houghton Mifflin to publish an illustrated edition. There must be some record of exchanges with her friends at Houghton Mifflin about the 1893 edition. And one may continue to wonder how the story Blanchard presents came to be.

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Photographic Materials

An extra-illustrated copy of *Deephaven* constructed by Coleman and gifted to Baker in 1907

Caroline Schimmel Collection, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts.

University of Pennsylvania. Archivist Regan Kladstrup graciously provided snapshot digital photos of the illustrations and their facing pages.

This is the only known copy of *Deephaven* to be so illustrated.

A set of digital images of the Coleman photo prints for *Deephaven*.

Sarah Orne Jewett Compositions and other papers, 1847-1909; Series: III. Diaries, financial agreements, and miscellany; [Illustrations for Deephaven]. bMS Am 1743.26, item 14. Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. seq. 1-90.

https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:15059856$1i

Digital image of a list giving the facing page location in *Deephaven* pre-1894 printings for each of the Houghton photos.

Sarah Orne Jewett Compositions and other papers, 1847-1909; Series: III. Diaries, financial agreements, and miscellany; [Illustrations for Deephaven]. bMS Am 1743.26, item 14. Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. seq. 101-103.

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A collection of Emma Coleman's glass plate negatives and of modern prints made from them.

Historic New England. "The Emma Lewis Coleman Photographic Collection consists of nearly 300 glass plate negatives, from which study prints have been made."

Presumably, this collection includes the negatives for the prints in the Houghton collection, but this has not been confirmed.

A collection of original prints of Coleman photos.

Old York Historical Society.

These bromide prints were made by Coleman herself, mounted on board, and embossed with her initials. It is not currently known whether this collection includes prints of all of the illustrations made for *Deephaven*, though it definitely contains some of them.

Published Coleman Photographs

Emma Lewis Coleman photographic collection, 1880s, Historic New England.
"The Emma Lewis Coleman Photographic Collection consists of nearly 300 glass plate negatives, from which study prints have been made." "Temporary" shows 13 images from this collection. Some are titled and annotated. One title relevant to this document is "C. Alice Baker in costume as a woman dragging a calf, Deerfield, Mass., 1880s." Note that the authority of the titles is not known. Several of the photos are identified as from York, Maine.

Gathering kelp, Long Sands, York, Maine, ca. 1882, Historic New England.
Catalog Description: This is a farmer loading his cart with kelp using a pitchfork on the shore of the ocean in York, Maine. The farmer owns a team of oxen that are pulling the cart.

This photograph is further described as being 5 x 7.5 inches, and with a handwritten inscription: "in old goal museum." Presumably this means the Old Gaol Museum of the Old York Historical Society.

George H. Donnell, York, Maine, early 1880s, Historic New England.
Catalog Description: George H. Donnell was a "shore" fisherman and lobsterman, in York River, Maine. He wears stiff cowhide boots, which were standard for rural workingmen. He holds a catch of fish, which may be pollock.

This photograph is further described as being 8 x 4.5 inches with a handwritten inscription: "Order June 1925 / #7990."

Donnell's grave may be here: https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/138194340/george-h-donnell.

The Houghton Library collection of 45 prints to illustrate *Deephaven.*
Sarah Orne Jewett Compositions and other papers, 1847-1909; Series: III. Diaries, financial agreements, and miscellany; [Illustrations for Deephaven]. bMS Am 1743.26, item 14. Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

Materials not accessible as of this writing

Coleman, Ellen. Original sleeves containing the glass plate negatives Coleman donated to Historic New England.

2021 communications with Historic New England indicated that these *may* have been preserved and that they may contain notes. As of this writing, it is not known whether they were preserved, whether plates for the *Deephaven* photos are in this collection, and if there are notes on any sleeves that were preserved. The Historic New England archive was closed for renovation during the time I was able to visit.

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Libby Bischoff cites Reichlin as a valuable source of information about Coleman. SPNEA is now Historic New England.

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Access to this document is restricted to the Williams College Library, and the author is unwilling to make a copy available outside the library.